



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





6000609120







# C L Y T I E.

*A Novel of Modern Life.*



BY  
JOSEPH HATTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.  
VOL. III.

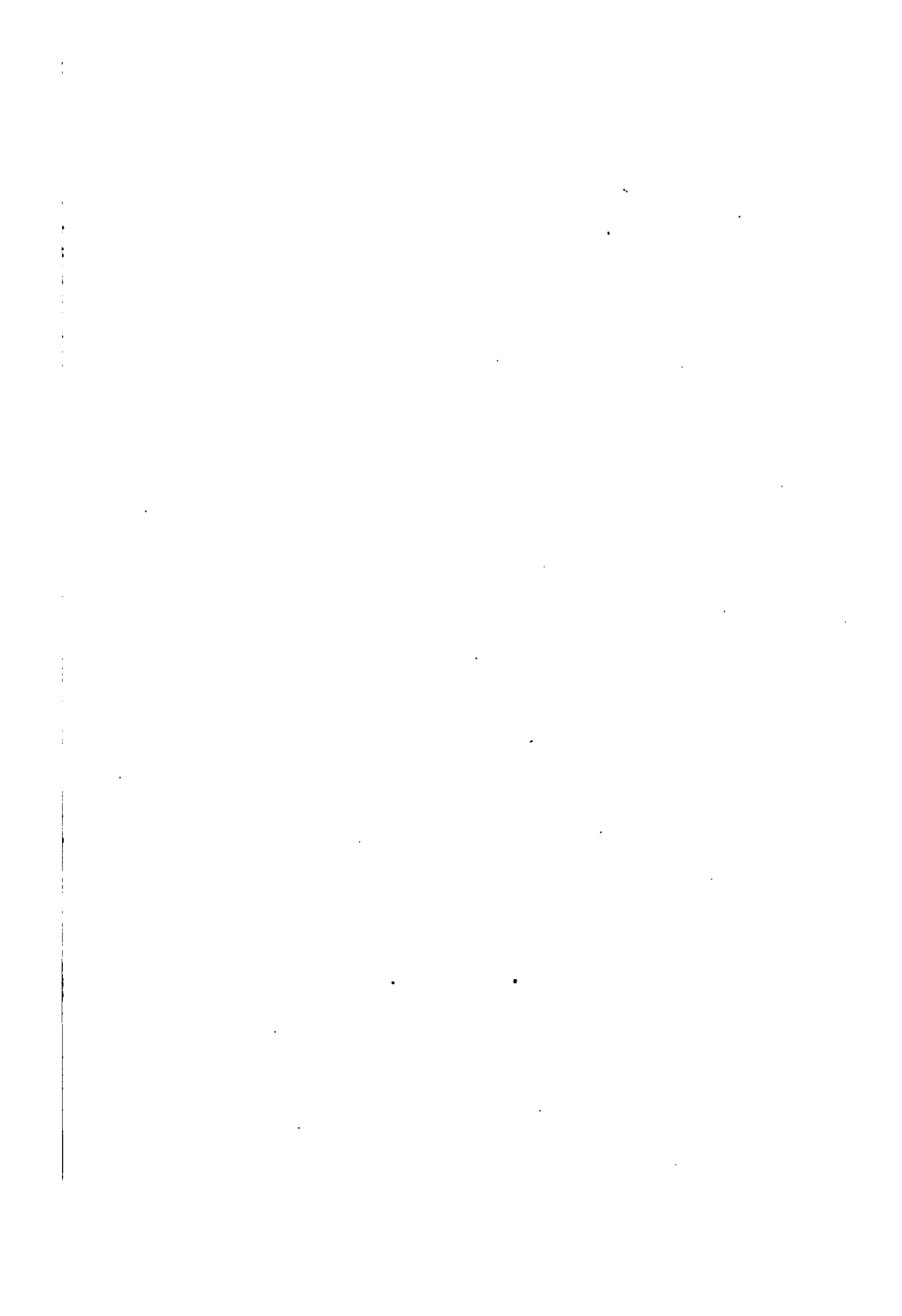


LONDON:  
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1874.

*[All rights reserved.]*

251. 6. 314.



## CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. AFTERWARDS . . . . .	I
II. SECRET FOR SECRET . . . . .	16
III. "IS IT DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN?" . . . . .	36
IV. DISCOUNTING FATE . . . . .	52
V. THE COMPROMISE . . . . .	70
VI. FROM THE GOLDEN GATES OF THE SUNNY WEST . . . . .	81
VII. KALMAT EXAMINES HIS REVOLVER . . . . .	95
VIII. CASTLES IN SPAIN . . . . .	104
IX. NEMESIS AT THE CUTTLE FISH INN . . . . .	129
X. AN EPITAPH . . . . .	147
XI. DAYBREAK . . . . .	156
XII. AN INQUEST . . . . .	169
XIII. DREAMS AND REALITIES . . . . .	194
XIV. THE ODD TRICK . . . . .	228
XV. THE ADJOURNMENT . . . . .	239
XVI. IN TWO HEMISPHERES ; AFTER A LAPSE OF YEARS . . . . .	254






# CLYTIE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### AFTERWARDS.

HE habit of living almost alone had made Kalmat a great observer. Men educated in large cities are not necessarily the best judges of character ; they do not always weigh motives with the nicest accuracy ; they are impulsive in their judgments, quick to conceive an opinion, often hasty in acting upon it. The Dervish who had lived long and alone found ample scope for the exercise of his observant faculties even in a desert. The story of the lost camel

and this Eastern philosopher's clue to the animal is perhaps the best illustration extant of logical observation.

Kalimat's faculties had been sharpened not only by living alone in a new world, but from often holding his life in his own hand among hostile tribes of Indians. What we call instinct had become second nature with him; it was the outcome of observation, the fruit of a logical mind trained in the school of solitude, danger, and adventure. He was the first to see that Clytie was gradually but surely breaking down under the fiendish cross-examination of Cuffing. Something told him that it was his duty to watch her closely, to constitute himself her body-guard, to keep her continually in view, to be near her, prepared to be of service on the shortest notice.

On the Sunday of the adjournment he thought he had discovered a clue to the woman who had been Clytie's nurse and attendant at the Piccadilly Chambers on that night when Ransford had planned her

downfall ; but instinct led him in the direction of Westminster, to reconnoitre the house which held the poor lady who had been literally broken on the wheel of legal licence.

It was a warm summer afternoon. London looked far lonelier to Kalmat than a Californian waste. It was good for him that his mind was thoroughly occupied.

He had walked only twice up and down the pavement opposite the Westminster Palace Hotel, when Lord St. Barnard's carriage drew up at the main entrance. Clytie came out escorted by her husband, who put her into the carriage and took leave of her with much affection and with some evident anxiety.

"You are sure you feel better?" said his lordship, before the footman closed the door.

Kalmat could not hear the lady's reply.

"And you will come up by the first train on Monday morning?"

His lordship was standing by the open door of the carriage. He spoke with a marked expression of solicitude.

"I do not like you to go alone ; but it is necessary I should see Holland and the others. Yes ; kiss the children—God bless you."

The next moment the horses were clattering over the granite stones, which rang under their iron hoofs ; and Kalmat had quietly slipped into a hansom to follow the carriage, which presently pulled up at the Paddington railway station, where the lady alighted. Kalmat concluded that the footman would obtain a ticket for her ladyship and that she would wait the arrival of the train in the ladies' room. But she carried a season ticket, and the servant followed her to the platform. Kalmat kept as near them as he could without attracting attention. He was still dressed in warm costume, despite the summer weather—a dark brown velvet coat and gray trousers, his iron-gray hair and beard heightening the bronzed hue of his characteristic features.

"You may go, Thomas," said Clytie, addressing the servant.

"Shall I not see your ladyship into the

train?" he asked respectfully, disobeying the command.

"No, thank you, his lordship may want the carriage; I shall get on very well. You may go."

The servant was loath to leave his mistress without going through all the usual formalities of the occasion; but at a significant glance indicating her wishes imperatively, the servant joined his companion on the box of the carriage, and left his mistress in far safer and better hands than his.

No sooner was Clytie alone than she looked around anxiously as if she expected some one. For a moment the action surprised Kalmat.

"Inspector," she said, addressing an official, who seemed to anticipate her desire to speak to him. He was a polite white-haired man.

"I beg your pardon, I want to ask you several questions."

"Certainly, madam," said the inspector, pocketing a half-sovereign.



6000609120







The little ones stood up to catch the first glimpse of their mamma, and Kalmat saw with what a wild, feverish look Clytie regarded them as she took her seat in their midst and presently disappeared in a cloud of dust down the leafy lane that leads to the quiet little village beloved of boating men and anglers.

Kalmat wandered behind the cloud, which presently cleared away, and left him in the village, with its straggling common and bridged rivulet ; its long, nubbly street ; its one-story post-office ; its farm-yard opening on the principal thoroughfare ; its half-dozen Cockneys smoking on the doorstep of the King's Arms ; its unpretentious chapel at the corner, with earnest voice in earnest prayer, coming in confused murmurs through the windows ; its fine old church tower beyond, standing out darkly and grandly against the blue sky, and glassing itself deep down in the Thames, which murmurs gently by the churchyard, where the tall grass seems in reply to whisper something sad and low. Kalmat walked through the churchyard

.

and listened to the closing hymn, and watched the happy worshippers as they came trooping out with prayer-books in their hands; watched them start on their Sunday morning's walk prior to the early dinner, and thought of long past days in Dunelm.

The younger portion of the congregation mostly chose the meadows for their walk, and passed Kalmat, who stood by the stile near the river. He singled out one fair girl who walked with an old man, the clergyman of the parish—singled her out as if to help his memory back to those summer days of yore. The maiden and her grandfather passed over the bridge and through the mowing grass and disappeared in the wood beyond, which looked down upon another wood in the deep waters that were flowing towards Grassnook.

Then the poet's eyes came back to the river with its gay boats, its steam launches, its lazy little yachts, its shooting out-riggers, its shallops with awnings to shelter happy

lovers. There were some boats for hire close by. He stepped into one and pulled it out into the stream. A pair of swans looked gravely at him out of their bead-like eyes as if they wondered what a sober gray-beard, without a vestige of boating costume, wanted upon the river sacred to jerseys and ducks, to nautical hats and pretty fluttering ribbons.

A gentle breeze tempered the heat of the sun. The scent of the mowing grass was fresh ; but for the level beauty of the scene, the soft delicate colours, the cultivated luxuriance of the banks, Kalmat could indeed have fancied himself back again in the city of his youth.

Presently he found himself in a lock with a little crowd of craft. The lock-keeper made pleasant remarks about the weather ; two of his chubby children looked down upon the voyagers, while his wife handed to each captain the ticket receipt for the toll.

It was a pretty scene, especially when the huge gates opened at last and let out.

the pent-up stream of boats, Kalmat shooting out in their midst like some strange wayfarer who had got accidentally mixed up with pleasure-seekers. He took his boat upon the other side of the river, down among a gray clump of rushes, and there he moored it and lighted his pipe.

When he felt that he was quite unobserved he stood up and looked towards Grassnook. He could see two grown people and two children upon the lawn. One was Lady St. Barnard, he felt sure; the other, no doubt, Mrs. Breeze, who received her ladyship with the children at the station. They were walking about; sometimes the lady with one child, sometimes with the other.

Presently the lady stopped and took the two children into her arms, and then left them with their attendant, who, taking each by the hand, walked towards the river as if she were obeying instructions, to take the little ones for a walk. This was Kalmat's interpretation. Clytie had taken leave of them. She was gone to prepare for her flight.

Kalimat's heart beat with a strange excitement. He pulled his boat out of the rushes and rowed it steadily up stream, past the quiet lawn of Grassnook. The Barnard children were already in the meadow, one of them chasing a butterfly. He slipped into the lock once more. He did not notice his fellow-voyagers now ; the picturesque group at the lock-gate attracted his attention no longer.

As soon as the gates creaked on their ponderous hinges he pushed out and gave way with a will. The boat groaned with his long, rough, vigorous stroke, and he presently bounded on shore at the boat-house. A clock struck. He looked at his watch. It wanted half an hour to the time of the train's departure. He passed through the churchyard and up the quiet street, took some refreshment at the village inn, and went to the railway station.

The repose of the place jarred upon him. The villagers were lounging about in the sun. A railway porter was lying asleep on a bench at the station. The train was due

in a quarter of an hour. It seemed very remote that short quarter of an hour. The bustle and excitement of the time were represented by a sleeping porter. Kalmat paced up and down the little platform, looked in at the station-master's window, where a woman was quietly rocking an infant on her knee and humming an Old World hymn. Five minutes more brought the chief of the little station from some mysterious corner ; the ticket office was thrown open ; the porter woke up ; four passengers arrived ; the signal telegraphic bell rang ; two more passengers arrived ; the child cried in the station-master's parlour ; three fishermen smoking and talking of their various fortunes on the river came noisily into the office ; it was five minutes to the time for the London train.

Kalmat looked curiously around him and saw at the farther end of the platform the last arrival—a lady in a dark travelling dress, with a lace-fall half over her face. Kalmat felt inexpressibly sad at

sight of her. He turned his head away and waited.

The train was punctual. The lady entered without speaking to any one. There was no changing at Maidenhead—the train plodded on to Paddington, picking up happy people by the way—men, women, and children who had spent Sunday in the country and were carrying home tokens of their holiday in the shape of flowers and fish. They crowded the carriages laughing and chattering, the children tired with too much joy. Other children in the fields cheered them as the train passed, until London, black and frowning, received the holiday makers back to the realities of existence.

At Paddington Clytie called a cab. Kalmat longed to open the door for her and pay her at least the homage of a gentlemanly and courteous nature ; but he had a more important part to play. He followed her in a hansom ; and in an hour afterwards the Folkestone train was panting through the Kentish hop-fields, carrying

---

with it the victim of the legal rack and thumb-screw, who looked now and then out upon the seemingly moving landscape with eyes that were dull and vacant under the influence of headache and heart-ache.

---



## CHAPTER II.

SECRET FOR SECRET.



SUMMER moon shone brightly upon Folkestone, making a long track over the sea.

The steamer was lying quietly at the pier. Porters were lazily removing the luggage from the tidal train. A couple of yachts and a variety of miscellaneous craft rose and fell gently upon the water. There was an unwonted air of quietude in the scene. The usual bustle of the place was gone. Nobody was in a hurry. The train was before its time, and the passengers were very few. The moon seemed to have a benign influence, even upon the captain.

Lady St. Barnard was the first on board. She wrapped a light Indian shawl about her shoulders, and took a seat upon deck. Kalmat had ascertained that she had no luggage. He went forward and looked wistfully across the sea, wondering what would be the end of this strange journey. It was clear enough to his mind that Clytie was not quite responsible for her actions. Her troubles had for the time being overturned her senses. She was under the first influences of brain fever. He revolved in his mind all the circumstances of her position and her wants ; he settled with himself all that he would do at Boulogne. If he had only dared to speak to her ! All in good time, that privilege would come. What would Lord St. Barnard think of her absence ? How would he interpret it ? Would he think her guilty ? Had she left any message, any letter for him ? Kalmat asked himself a thousand questions and answered them variously ; but he was always certain about his own course of action.

The boat was moving. They were out at sea. The moonlight was flashing on the windows of the town they had left behind. Kalmat paced the deck. The dark figure of the stricken woman was still motionless at the stern of the vessel. Kalmat took a seat near her. The sea was perfectly calm. There was only enough wind to whisper the secrets of the ocean. The deep waters rose and fell gently, as if only for the purpose of rocking the moonbeams that lay in pale splendour upon the bosom of the sea. She sat there, the persecuted victim whom Kalmat had loved in the long past days of his blighted youth ; she sat there quiet and still, looking before her, while her heart was at Grassnook with her little ones. It seemed like a dream to Kalmat, a dream of the Western land, the more so with soft breezes on his cheek, and a bright full moon, such as he had not seen since he left the golden regions of the Indian.

The white and many-windowed houses of Boulogne soon rose up against the cloudless sky. The two arms of the harbour

seemed to be stretched out to receive the vessel that glided into them without straining a rope.

When the passengers were making their way on shore, Kalmat placed himself by Clytie's side. The moment she landed she spoke to a commissionaire, requested him to procure her a cabriolet, and take her to the Hôtel des Bains. Kalmat was glad to hear the direction. This was the same hotel at which he had stayed during his investigation into the death of Frank Barnard's wife and the birth of the woman who in her great affliction had longed to be near her mother's grave.

Kalmat followed his charge to the hotel, and when she was safely lodged he sought the proprietor of the house, with whom he was upon good terms, and told him there had just arrived a lady of distinction and he hoped she would receive every possible attention. He feared she was ill. Indeed, he believed she had already seriously developed the first symptoms of brain fever.

She had recently undergone a great affliction.

While he was speaking a servant informed monsieur the manager that a lady who had ordered a suite of rooms wished to speak with him. The manager went straightway, saying he would return presently. Kalmat followed him into the courtyard, which he had to cross to reach the wing of the building in which the lady was lodged. It was a pleasant, old-fashioned courtyard, with trees in boxes, and seats. Kalmat lighted a cigar and smoked until the manager returned and beckoned him into his little room.

"Since you have given me your confidence about this lady," said the manager, "I am sure I can trust you to keep her secret, which I will share with you."

"You are very good ; you shall have no reason to regret that you trusted me," said Kalmat.

"I believe you are a Mason?" said the manager, looking Kalmat full in the face.

Kalmat made a suitable reply ; the man-

ager responded with a sign, and took from his brother of the mysterious order a pledge, which being solemnly registered, the manager gave himself up to the situation.

"The lady who sent for me," he said, "is the wife of Lord St. Barnard. That is the lady you mean!"

"Yes," said Kalmat.

"She was here with her husband last year; the most charming people who have ever honoured this house with their patronage."

"Yes? I am glad to hear you say so. Did they appear to be happy?"

"Very; I never saw a more devoted couple. When they were not playing with their two children they were chatting and talking together, or his lordship was sitting by the piano while she was singing."

"Yes, yes," said Kalmat; for in spite of himself he felt a pang of jealousy at the enjoyment of a happiness which he had himself once dreamed might be his own.

"I thought you wished to know all about them," said the manager.

"Forgive me, I do; but you shall tell me of the past some other time—the present is full of seriousness."

"As you please," said the manager. "Her ladyship has just told me frankly that she wishes to remain incognita for a time. She gave me no reason, but asked me if I had seen the newspapers. I said yes, but did not believe a word that scoundrel had said. She raised her hand as if she did not wish me to talk about it; but said: 'Then you will understand, I come here for rest; I was too ill to remain in London. I have left my husband to conclude matters there. I do not wish any one here to know who I am; I do not desire for the present even that my husband should know where I am. I fear I am very ill. Send a doctor to see me in the morning; I trust you with my confidence, and I rely upon your honour to maintain my secret until I shall explain to you or instruct you further.'"

"Poor soul," said Kalmat.

"I told her," continued the manager, "that I was greatly honoured by her confidence."

"And you are," interpolated Kalmat.

"I asked her what I should order for her, begged her to command me and my house as if house and servants were her own—not to think that anything she could ask would be a trouble to us."

"You are a good fellow," said Kalmat.

"I then took my leave, sent my housekeeper to her with the fullest instructions."

"Good. Did she say anything about luggage?"

"Yes, I had forgotten," said the manager.

"I remarked to her ladyship that no luggage had arrived for her. She replied that she had brought none; she would purchase whatever she might require in Boulogne."

"Tell your housekeeper to regard her as if she were an invalid, and anticipate her wants."

"I will," said the manager.



" Her suite of apartments," said Kalmat, " overlook the courtyard on the left ?"

" They do."

" Will you point them out to me, that I may be sure ?"

The manager led the way into the courtyard ; pointed to four lighted windows *en suite*. Then returning to the room they had just left, which opened upon the yard, the manager said :

" And now, my dear sir, as this lady is under my care, and seeing that I have trusted you implicitly, I think I am entitled to ask why you take such a deep interest in her ; what you know of her movements ?"

" You are right," said Kalmat. " You are acquainted to some extent with the business which brought me here a few days ago."

" The priest required my services slightly in connection with the verification of a document," said the manager.

" Yes ; and you know that we were searching the registers for a marriage and a death ?"

"I heard you say so."

"The marriage and the death," said Kalmat, "were the marriage of this lady's mother and her death at Boulogne; the birth was that of this very lady, who at this moment needs all our watchfulness and care."

"Yes?" said the manager, doubtfully; "is that all?"

"I knew her when she was a girl at Dunelm; I take the deepest interest in her welfare; I knew the poor old man, her grandfather, the organist who is mentioned in the trial. I am at this moment engaged in procuring important evidence in her favour. I am her friend. There is nothing in the world I would not do for her, even unto death."

"Then you must be"—said the manager, starting to his feet.

"No. 20," said Kalmat solemnly, "that was my number when I stayed here before. Do not interrupt me. At present it is necessary that I should work in the dark. I have never spoken to her husband, but I

respect and honour him. I am rich, as my friend Father Lemare can testify. I have no occupation in the world but that which this unhappy case gives me. I would not say this to any other man. I am frank and open with you, because I feel that I can and must trust you."

The manager looked thoughtfully at the ceiling for a moment.

"I knew you were not a professional detective," he said. "I feel that you are a true gentleman; your number, you say, is 20; now there is another number you must remember as well."

"What is that?"

"The number of your lodge."

"No; we had no number. I was made a Freemason in a mining-hut on the banks of a Californian river, in a mining village, where the brethren had seen neither wife, sister, maid nor mother for six months; where the outer guard was no symbolic figure or person, but had for cowans the wild Indians of the adjacent prairie," said Kalmat.

"You are a strange brother," said the manager, "but I am bound to take the sign you now give me; and further than that, my judgment tells me that you will not deceive me. There is my hand again."

The two men shook hands; Kalmat filled his meerschaum, the manager lighted a cigar, rang the bell, and ordered a bottle of claret. When the servant had left the room, the manager said,

"Well, sir, and what is your course of action?"

"To place the lady, through you, in the hands of the best physician in the town; to ensure her every comfort; to ask you to act thoroughly upon your word to her, and give her the undivided services of your housekeeper; to beg of you to see that her every want is anticipated; and having done this, I intend to return to London and explain all that has transpired to her husband."

"Do you not think that would be a breach of trust?"

"I do not."

"But she made me promise not to give any information to any one concerning her."

"Neither do you. I am not pledged, and I know her secret. I know what is best for her to have known. The truth is she is not in her proper senses. She has been persecuted and tried beyond the endurance of man or woman. The last thing she would dream of doing is to cause her husband pain; and when she recovers you will see that she will endorse in every particular all I shall do."

"You know best," said the manager. "I can promise and ensure her safety and comfort so far as the medical skill and the resources of Boulogne will permit. When do you propose to go across?"

"By the first boat," said Kalmat, consulting his watch.

"At eight o'clock," said the landlord. "It is now after two; you will want some sleep."

"That means you would like to go to bed," said Kalmat. "Well, good-night. See that your housekeeper or a reliable

---

servant sits up in the room next to that in which Lady St. Barnard sleeps, in case she should require her. And let her ladyship know of the arrangement."

"I will," said the manager ; and the two parted for the night.

Kalimat did not go to bed. He sat smoking in his room, and talking to a bust.

"It is darkest before the dawn," he said. "There is hope in that, and if the approach of dawn is heralded by the darkness, then, indeed, the light cannot be far off. Little less than a miracle it seems to me, my Clytie, can sweep the clouds away ; yet surely it is not given to thy tormentors and persecutors, that they are to be triumphant in their villainy. They do flourish sometimes, the unworthy, the thief, the cur, the scoundrel. I have seen them, Clytie, in that land beneath the shadow of the Indian Olympus, well mounted, fattening on plunder, thriving on blood, the Indian fading out before them, passing away in the land of their fathers. On the banks of the

---

great river where their chiefs had held the right to hunt and fish, the privilege to live, I have seen them slain, starved, hunted down, men, women, and children ; and our white brethren have rejoiced at the slaughter, and possessed themselves of the lands. It has been dark, dark there, my Clytie, and no dawn has come, but there are quiet, shady places beyond the Sierras, where thee and thine may dwell, if need be, beyond the sound of tyranny, outside the world of strife, beneath a warm and glowing sun. We can build there a home in that land of the oak and the pine, which shall be proof against slander, and I will teach thy children how to handle the rifle, how to track the grizzly, how to ride and fish, and become strong men ; they shall be my pupils, I will be their master ; they shall matriculate in Nature's own college, and we will adapt the wisdom of the sages to the new world, to new thoughts, to new things."

He paced the room, and pushed back the long luxuriant hair from his forehead.

“And perhaps thou shalt have a sister, and her name will be Shaseta. It is quite a legend in its way. On the Sacramento valley lived a tribe of Indians. They had made reprisals upon some whites on the opposite shore, reprisals that in a state of wild warfare could have been justified. For years I had lived among Indians of various tribes, and had made efforts to obtain official recognition of their rights. It had even entered into my mind to form an Indian Republic, under the protectorate of the government of the United States. I loved these people ; they had been kind to me, and I had learnt the nature of their wrongs ; but I was powerless to help them. I knew not this wandering tribe who had pitched their tents on the Sacramento valley, but they were the last of their race, and held their lives cheaply ; they longed to pass away to the everlasting hunting-ground. I was pressed to join the conflict against them, pressed by white brethren, who showed me their mutilated dead, and conjured me by ties of kindred. I placed



myself at the head of a band of miners, but my share in the battle was chiefly exercised in warnings of flight, which I gave aloud in their own tongue to the Indian warriors, who were outnumbered, and must fall. The unequal battle begun. I was wounded; the arrows showered thick and fast about us. I fell insensible, as thou art, my Clytie, now, and I hope thy dreams were of childhood, as mine were. By-and-by I felt the smart, and heard my comrades talking as they removed the arrow from my flesh. My dreams were of Dunelm and the cathedral meadows. Presently I was left alone, the fighting had recommenced. I roused myself, my knife was in my belt. Sounds of death were all about me. Into the hut where they had carried me, there rushed an Indian girl, daughter of the chief, as I found afterwards. A hand was raised to kill her. I averted the blow, stood between her and death. The white demon soon had other occupation than slaying children, for the fight was raging fierce and hot. We crawled out into the bush, she and me;

this helpless frightened maiden clung to my arm, and we saw the red flames mount up to the very sky, telling to heaven the story of death and destruction, appealing to God for His divine intervention. This was the last of the Indians in the Sacramento valley, and the maiden, she must have been heaven-directed. It was Shaseta; she had thine own soft look, thy pouting lips, thy round form, thy bashful smile; she was thy very self in shadow; brown as the berries in autumn, agile as the elk, the loveliest of the Indian type. I have not seen her for two years. I sent her in charge of a missionary and his wife to Boston, that she might be educated and taught, if possible, to forget the horrors of that awful night; nay, more, with selfish designs, for I said unto myself, 'Next year I will go to Europe, and if she be sent to me to remind me of her whom I loved in the days of my youth, I shall find Clytie there married, or to be wooed, perchance, or it may be needing a friend,' and it seemed to me that Europe wanted me, that I ought to visit the land of my birth, whither I had

already sent the first offspring of my wayward muse. I came to England, to London. I was wanted. That secret soul-sympathy, which is one of the mysteries of life, drew me thither. In England I am Fate, I am Justice. Yonder, in the Far West, I shall be what Love and Peace and the Great Spirit may choose. It may be that Shaseta shall be thy sister, walking together in the peaceful valleys."

He turned from the bust, and clenched his hand.

"And now, my Clytie, I leave thee to thy dreams and to the mercy of Heaven. It is not fitting I show thee the executioner, but as sure as the Indian Olympus raises its snowy cap to the morning sun, Philip Ransford dies. I am no murderer, but Fate selects me for his minister. I will give him his life. He shall carry it in his hand. I will meet him face to face, hand to hand. One of us will fall. It suits not our modern England, this kind of justice; but I am without the pale in thought, in deed, in manner. I shall win thy husband's heart

---

when I bring him tidings of thee, and tell him Tom Mayfield has returned to England."

It hardly seemed that he had slept at all when they brought him coffee at seven, and said the boat started at eight; but he had slept refreshingly, for Kalmat had that fortunate faculty of many men of action, he could sleep almost when he wished. When he laid his head upon his pillow, it was not to think and toss and dream, but to sleep, and he had need of rest at this time, for there were busy days and nights before him in the darkness through which he was called to fight; and let us hope to conquer.

### CHAPTER III.

"IS IT DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN?"



LORD ST. BARNARD had hardly returned to the Westminster Palace Hotel, to consult, not with Mr. Holland nor with his solicitors, but with himself upon the situation which had arisen, when he received the following note :—

"Would your lordship have any objection to see me for five minutes ?

"S. CUFFING."

"Show the gentleman up," said Lord St. Barnard, "and see that we are not disturbed."

Cuffing entered the room gradually.

He appeared by inches, and every inch of him was on the *qui vive*. When he was fairly inside the room he looked sharply round it and then glanced warily at Lord St. Barnard.

"Do not be afraid," said his lordship, standing erect upon the hearth-rug, with a firm but troubled expression of face; "there is no occasion for alarm."

"I am not afraid," said Cuffing, bowing awkwardly to his lordship and still looking around suspiciously, "but I fear my presence is not very agreeable to you."

"It is not, sir," said Lord St. Barnard, without moving. "I do not like you, certainly, if that is what you mean; but I suppose you have only carried out your instructions and that you are here upon business of some importance."

"Thank you, my lord, thank you," said Cuffing, closing the door and advancing further into the room. "I have been within my instructions, and I come here on business of far more interest to your lordship than to myself."

"Indeed," said his lordship laconically.

"Yes," said Cuffing, "I assure your lordship I have many times felt deeply grieved for Lady St. Barnard, and I accuse myself greatly for ever having taken the case up ; but if I had not some one else would, and some one who might have acted upon his instructions more strictly than I have done."

"Perhaps," said Lord St. Barnard. "It is a very sad and unfortunate affair."

"Indeed it is," said Cuffing, laying down his hat and stick, and advancing three steps further towards his lordship. "In the whole of my professional career I have not had so painful a duty to perform."

"Did you come here to offer me this explanation?"

"No, not exactly," replied Cuffing quickly, and again cautiously surveying the room ; "I came here partly out of sympathy for your lordship and with the intention of asking if there is anything I can do to lighten the load which presses so heavily upon yourself and wife."

"I do not understand you," said Lord St. Barnard. "Pray be seated and speak further."

"I can stand," said Cuffing. "Are we quite alone here? Will anything I say be overheard? Is Mr. White in the neighbourhood? I know what a special faculty Mr. White has of overhearing."

"We are quite alone," said his lordship, "quite; if you come nearer you need not speak above a whisper, if you think well."

"Good," said Cuffing, advancing firmly. "What I am going to say to your lordship is of course without prejudice, and must be regarded as confidential between man and man—I ought to say between myself and your lordship."

"Without prejudice," said his lordship, "that I concede; but I cannot promise to accept a secret from you."

"Then it is no good my staying," said Cuffing, taking up his hat.

"You know best," said his lordship, looking down curiously upon the wily, serpent-like advocate.



"I do," said Cuffing. "Good-day, my lord."

He had reached the door before Lord St. Barnard called him back.

"If it was worth your while to come here," he said, "it is worth your while to carry out your mission."

"I would like to do so," said Cuffing, returning, and again placing his hat and cane upon a chair as if he were glad he had been recalled.

"Let me say then, while I cannot give you a pledge of confidence until I know the kind of communication which you are about to make to me, I give you my word that I will receive what you have to say in a fair and considerate spirit."

"In the spirit in which it is offered?" said Cuffing, taking a pinch of snuff in a thoughtful way. The snuff-box and a pair of eye-glasses helped him now and then to gain time, though he rarely used either. He was generally a match for all occasions; but Lord St. Barnard's coolness bothered him.

"Well, perhaps I may go as far as that," said his lordship.

"I will trust you," said Cuffing suddenly, "I will trust you."

Lord St. Barnard sat down, thus bringing himself somewhat on a level as regards height with his visitor.

"It is reported," said Cuffing, "that Lady St. Barnard has left the country."

"Oh, it is reported, is it? Well."

"Well," said Cuffing, pointing his finger at Lord St. Barnard as if his lordship were a witness under cross-examination, "now supposing this should be the case, it is pretty clear that on our reappearance at Bow Street next week, this prosecution is not only at an end, but it finishes most disastrously for Lady St. Barnard."

"Well?"

"Now my client has, during the last four and twenty hours, been greatly afflicted with remorse, and I am satisfied that if his own liberty had not been in danger, he would have made an effort to release Lady St. Barnard from the awful position in which she was placed."

“Yes?”

“I am sure of it, quite sure,” said Cuffing, a little embarrassed under the calm scrutiny of the injured husband. “You see, Ransford is naturally a coward, and he was afraid of being transported. It was a mistake to press so heavily upon him—Mr. Holland is not judicious; he knows nothing of criminal practice. Now Ransford, in the first instance, had been a good deal harassed and worried and annoyed at the treatment he had received.”

“The treatment he had received!” said Lord St. Barnard, contemptuously. “The scoundrel! he ought to have been flogged at a cart’s tail.”

“That may be,” said Cuffing, relieved by this outburst of feeling, in which he saw far more encouragement to his hopes than in the calm, calculating reception which his remarks had met with up to that time. “He may be a scoundrel—probably he is; but that is neither here nor there at this particular moment of time. I am neither here to support Ransford, nor to condemn

him. I am not here, in short, to do anything which may affect him in that respect. It is clear, my lord, that in his early days he held a respectable position in life, and so far as education is concerned and money, was entitled to every courtesy and consideration——"

"I do not know," said his lordship impatiently.

"Pardon me, your lordship," said Cuffing, flinging open his shabby frock coat with a forensic air, "pardon me, I only say what is well known. He came to grief. He fell from his high estate. It is only a brave man who can fall gracefully. Ransford is not a brave man. He ascribed his financial ruin to Lady St. Barnard. Pardon me, it is best to let me continue. She certainly was afterwards endowed with the very property he would have come into but for his father's misfortunes. Poetic justice, Mr. Holland would say. I think not; but in any case Ransford had something like a reasonable grievance, and it rankled in his mind."

"Well, well," said Lord St. Barnard. "Sir, you must excuse me, I cannot listen to this kind of talk ; I have heard enough of it elsewhere ; I do not desire to transfer Bow Street to my private room. If this is what you have sought an interview with me for, the sooner we close it the better."

Lord St. Barnard rose impatiently and looked angrily at his visitor.

"If that is your decision," said Cuffing, "I am very sorry ; but I came to say something of real importance ; only I thought I would lead up to it. There are communications, sir, which cannot be blurted out, which must be led up to, and such a communication I come here to make to a noble lord whose wife is in great trouble. No matter, I beg his lordship's pardon and take my leave."

Cuffing took up his hat and stick.

"You provoke me almost beyond endurance," said Lord St. Barnard, biting his lips. "I have every desire to hear you. Be frank and open and say what you came to say ; surely you have made a sufficiently

lengthy introduction to your most important announcement."

"I simply say this," said Mr. Cuffing, laying down his hat and placing his stick in a corner near the mantelpiece, and then, once more taking snuff, "I simply say that if it is true Lady St. Barnard has gone away, your lordship will be convinced that you cannot substantiate the charge you have made against my client, Mr. Philip Ransford. Under these circumstances he will go free. Now, supposing something could be done by my client to restore Lady St. Barnard to her social position, that, I I take it, would be a matter of great satisfaction to your lordship."

Cuffing adjusted his neckcloth and looked at his lordship askance—looked at him out of the corners of his ferret-like eyes.

"If your client," said Lord St. Barnard, "would unsay all he has said, and confess to the conspiracy against my wife, that, I grant you, would be a noble action, would entitle him to my lasting gratitude, in spite of my present misery."

"Yes, yes," said Cuffing, smiling and nodding with a freedom which he had not before assumed, "but you go too fast ; your imagination is excited. Tut, tut, we must proceed by easier stages."

Lord St. Barnard's feelings were now thoroughly roused, and the police-court advocate felt that he had him in his grasp.

"Nevertheless," continued Cuffing, "what you say may possibly afford a basis of negotiation. Now, by way of testing this, would you, for example, object to an interview with Mr. Philip Ransford?"

His lordship did not answer for a moment ; his face flushed with anger ; he rose and paced the room. Then, turning suddenly upon Cuffing, he said :

"If he were a gentleman, and we lived in the good old days, nothing would have satisfied me so well as to have run the coward through."

"Ah, now we are romancing," said Cuffing. "I would not have given your lordship credit for such a purposeless outburst."

"You are right ; it is absurd. But I do not think it is possible I could meet this man without forgetting my position and his."

"I am sorry for that," said Cuffing, "because I think he has some proposition to offer to your lordship. He is very poor, he is very unwell, greatly depressed, is suffering from remorse ; and while I have no authority to say so, I think a matter of a few thousand pounds, ensuring him a comfortable if not a happy exile, would work wonders in the present position of the case. Now, my lord, I have no right to say as much as this, but I sympathize with you and your lady, and if something could be done to restore her and yourself to the position from which you will surely fall completely next week, when the period of adjournment is up, I confess it would be a matter of great personal gratification to me. You will no doubt have observed that it is stated in the first edition of the evening papers that your lordship is about to resign all your noble and distinguished



appointments in the Royal Household, and that there is every reason to believe the prosecution of Mr. Philip Ransford is at an end."

"I have not seen the evening papers," said his lordship ; "but if the report you speak of concerning my wife is true, there may be equal truth in such foreshadowing of events. I admit nothing. I only tell you that for myself—but it is not necessary, however, that I should explain my feelings to you. Am I right in believing that on the payment of a certain sum of money to Ransford he will withdraw all the charges he has made against Lady St. Barnard, will confess that they are utterly untrue, that he has made them of malice aforethought, with some insane idea of revenge ; that he will own to his entire crime, write down the shameful confession, and sign it in the presence of witnesses, on condition that I forego the prosecution at Bow Street, and allow him to escape to some foreign country ?"

Lord St. Barnard put his questions one

after the other rapidly, and with intense earnestness.

"Ah, now your lordship's imagination is running away with you again. You are at liberty to interpret what I have said in your own way, but you must not expect me to endorse all you think and fancy. If, however, you could sufficiently control yourself to meet Mr. Philip Ransford I think matters might turn out very much as your lordship would desire. There! I have overdone my mission. What I have said is understood to be without prejudice, and I have been tempted thus far, on your pledged honour as a gentleman and a lord, to regard what I have said in the proper spirit."

"I accept the position," said his lordship, "fully and frankly; I will see your client."

"When?"

"The sooner the better."

"I am with you in that," said Cuffing.

"It would not be well to bring him here."

"No, perhaps not."

"I will see him at your office, if that is agreeable."

"Most agreeable," said Cuffing, taking up his hat.

"Favour me with your address," said his lordship.

"Cassel Street, Holborn," said Cuffing, fetching his stick. "No. 14; you cannot mistake it."

Lord St. Barnard wrote down the address in his pocket-book.

"The hour?" asked his lordship.

"Eight o'clock to-night," said Cuffing, "if convenient to Lord St. Barnard."

"I will be there," said his lordship.

"Good," said Cuffing, bowing and leaving the room without another word.

"Shall I go alone?" said his lordship, closing the door upon Cuffing and striding slowly across the room. "Is it some new villainy, or the first streak of daylight?"

He rang the bell.

"Any telegram?" he asked.

"No, my lord," said the servant.

"Go to Mr. White's office, and ask if they have anything for me."

The servant bowed and retired.

"No news of her yet," said his lordship.  
"Is it darkest before the dawn? Or has the night come at last—the night which has no morning?"

## CHAPTER IV.

### DISCOUNTING FATE.



At seven o'clock in the evening Mr. Philip Ransford and his solicitor were closeted in the dusty little third floor office where Mr. Cuffing conducted his legal business. The house was one of numerous degenerate buildings congregated together in a dingy street that seemed to have crept out of the way of the traffic of Holborn. Cassel Street indeed might be likened to a suspected person in low water, who pulls his hat over his eyes and slouches out of general observation. It led to nowhere. Smart pedestrians sometimes, thinking it offered a short cut to the neighbourhood of

Fleet Street, dashed into it gaily, but soon came back with a look of depression and surprise. Cassel Street was chiefly occupied by touting attorneys, bailiffs, commission agents, advertising adventurers, brokers, and other miscellaneous dregs of professional and commercial life, relieved here and there by an eating-house with red blinds.

The stuffy odour of the street dragged its way slowly but surely in upon client and solicitor as they conversed on this memorable summer evening.

"If you are discreet," said Cuffing, "you can soon get well away from this infernal atmosphere, as you call it. Already I can fancy you doing the swell in sunny Spain or under some other unclouded sky."

Mr. Cuffing sat in his shirt sleeves, looking, with an undisguised sneer upon his face, at Ransford, who was walking about the little room, occasionally pausing to take special note of the lawyer's advice.

"Don't care where I go," said Ransford, "if I get clear of this beastly country."

"Well, as I said just now," remarked Cuffing, "ten thousand pounds is a small sum considering the sacrifice you propose to make. You are so wonderfully modest."

"Always sneering at me; but no matter, I can bear it after what I have gone through," said Ransford, with an air of martyrdom; "and I only want what you consider right and just, though I don't think we shall get ten thousand—it is a pile."

"Don't say 'we,' my innocent and deeply injured friend, my most interesting client—don't say 'we.' I have told you over and over again that this proposed compromise is your own affair entirely. I do not advise it; but if it is agreed upon I will do my best to make it complete, and to carry out your wishes."

"I don't understand you," said Ransford.

"That is not my fault," responded Cuffing with a pitying glance at his friend, as if he had long since given up any ex-

pectation that Ransford had sufficient intellectual capacity to understand anything.

"You make me mad," said Ransford, stopping suddenly. "I can't stand your sneers; you'll make me do something desperate one of these days."

"That would be a novelty. If I could only find that fellow Mayfield I would like to put him in your path and see of what you are really capable in the way of physical power."

"Why do you worry me in this way?" said Ransford, suddenly modifying his assumed anger into a tone of friendly appeal.

"Because you won't go straight; because you are a humbug," said Cuffing, rising and going to the window.

"Why? how? Explain."

"Not now; let us go on with our business; there is no time for personal explanations; our friend Lord St. Barnard will be here soon."

"Well then, fix it at ten thousand," said Ransford, "and we are to divide it?"



"I ought to have seven thousand," said Cuffing. "You are entirely in my hands. I could crush you at any moment. I have condescended to conduct your wretched case : it has ruined my reputation. If you had a spark of liberality you would have said, 'Mr. Cuffing, I leave the disposition of the money to you,' and of course I should have been content ; possibly I might have said seven thousand to you, three to me——"

"But," said Ransford.

"Don't interrupt ; did I not literally drag you out of custody this morning ?"

"Yes," said Ransford, "but you literally thrust me into custody to begin with. I would never have entered upon the affair if I had known what I should have had to suffer."

"You would have entered upon it for three thousand pounds."

"I don't know ; I was very hard up, but, upon my soul, I never dreamed you would have asked some of the questions which

you put, and that is the straight tip, my friend."

Ransford looked half afraid at his own temerity in criticising Cuffing's conduct of the case even to this extent.

"I carried out the instructions of my client," said Cuffing, with a smile, "and I don't believe a word of his story, except that part of it in which he was very deservedly licked by his rival, who some day, when he gets the English papers out in the colonies, will turn up again, hunt you down, and shoot you like a dog."

Phil Ransford shuddered and looked round the room as if he expected the appearance of the avenger.

"Ah! I thought that would touch you up; you are not a brave man, Ransford. I suppose you would tell Mayfield on your knees and with tears in your eyes that I asked the questions without your instructions."

"You know you did most of them," said Ransford, "when we had that interview at Bow Street, although you would not admit

it in your stiff and convenient legal way ; all that about Cremorne and the Argyle was your own entirely."

"Indeed!" said Cuffing, finding his eyeglass, after a brief search in his waistcoat pocket, and fixing his client for a moment ; "and was that as villainous, do you think, as the Piccadilly story ? It was quite as true. Eh ? Was it not ? Why were you not frank and straight with me at first ? The truth is you have persecuted this poor woman to make money. When you felt yourself grappled you felt obliged to heap lie upon lie to hold your position at all."

"And you call this decent !" said Ransford. "Well, it is not business-like at all events just now."

"That is the wisest remark you have made since I have had the honour of your acquaintance," said Cuffing.

"Thank you. I will only just remind you that you put the whole scheme into my head at the outset, and——"

"Say no more, Ransford ; let us to the business."

Cuffing rubbed his hands, sat down to his desk, pointed to a chair, and Ransford, accepting the hint, seated himself by the side of his advocate and ally.

"It is quite clear," said Cuffing, in his professional voice and manner, "that if they go on with the case our position will be a very different one after another fortnight's examination to what it is now. I have expected every day to hear that they had found the woman who had charge of the Piccadilly chambers."

"Well, and if they did find her?"

"Will she corroborate all Lady St. Barnard has said?"

"She cannot."

"Do you tell me that seriously?"

"I do."

"That your version of the story or what it hints at is correct?"

"Certainly; but I am not in the box. I pull you up once more to the business," said Ransford, with a conciliatory smile. "Supposing this woman did corroborate Lady St. Barnard? What then?"

“What then! Everything then,” said Cuffing, taking snuff. “Further, there is this Tom Mayfield; rely upon it sooner or later he must turn up. The newspaper reports will go all over the world, and we shall have such a flood of voluntary evidence against us that you will suddenly find yourself, not only committed, but sentenced to a life of transportation.”

Phil Ransford turned pale and moved about uneasily in his chair.

“Well, what shall I do?” he said. “Am I not here to receive, not only your advice, but your instructions?”

“Yes; but you do not buckle down to your position,” said Cuffing, getting up and shutting the window, that he might raise his voice with more certainty of not being heard, though the window was three storeys from the ground. “You wrangle, you higgler, you presume upon my friendship, you try to wriggle out of a fair and liberal settlement between us; and I tell you what it is, Philip Ransford, by my soul you

shall do what I tell you or you shall know what the inside of Millbank is like."

"There is no cause that I see for all this passion," said Ransford.

"Is there not! Very well, be good enough to understand what I say, and don't put on that sneaking, injured look which adorned your face just now when we talked of the money."

"Cuffing, I will not be bullied in this way," exclaimed Ransford, starting to his legs.

"Won't you, sneak, cur!" said Cuffing, with quiet, biting calmness. "Sit down, sir, and don't clench your fist at me; I would as soon put a bullet through your head as look at you—and you know it."

"You have a beastly temper," said Ransford, sitting down sulkily. "I wonder you give way to it; such violent fits of rage are incomprehensible to me."

Cuffing, it is to be presumed, found it desirable to lash himself into those occasional outbursts as an additional means of awing his client into a proper submission.

"Temper !" said the lawyer, sitting down once more and adjusting his papers. " You are enough to provoke a saint ; I shall be glad to wipe my hands of you and your business ; the sooner the better. All I want now is to see you with two or three thousand pounds in your pocket on board a ship, with a new future before you, and comfort and happiness for the rest of your life ; and yet when I lay this prospect before you, when I throw fortune at your feet, when I offer you wealth and liberty, you turn upon me and higgle and haggle, like an ungrateful hound."

" Well, well," said Ransford, holding out his hand, " let us be friends ; we know too much of each other to be enemies, and I am sure my only desire in life is to be friends. Shake hands, and tell me what to do. Treat me decently, don't sneer at me and bully me, and I'll do whatever you tell me."

Cuffing took the hand that was offered to him with a little more civility than he

usually exhibited in response to Ransford's friendly demonstrations.

"It is now," he said, relapsing into his customary manner, "a quarter to eight. At eight o'clock Lord St. Barnard will be here. What you have to do, and what you have proposed to do—without my advice, mind—and what you must do is this : For the sum of ten thousand pounds, to be paid down, you agree to draw up a statement in which you set forth what is the truth in this painful affair ; you state fully, and without reservation, that the charges and insinuations which you have brought against Lady St. Barnard's character are unfounded and untrue in every respect."

"But——" said Ransford, rising.

"Sit down and hear me," said Cuffing, laying his hand authoritatively on Ransford's arm. "Are unfounded and untrue in every respect ; that you used your knowledge of Lady St. Barnard and her family to fabricate falsehoods against her, for the sole purpose of obtaining money ; that it was through this means and no other that



---

you did obtain money from the lady ; that on your oath you declare you never knew and never heard anything against her honour or reputation ; that the luncheon at the Delphos Theatre was part of your general scheme of defamation. It is no good wriggling about in your chair ; you must listen—time presses. You say you did put a sleeping draught into the lady's wine ; that your intentions were base as they could be, but were not in the slightest degree successful ; that the lady's version of the Piccadilly business is quite correct, and the whole story against her false and malicious from beginning to end. You were induced to continue these charges, and influenced to make the statutory declaration, because you conceived yourself insulted by Lord St. Barnard, who ordered you out of his hotel and otherwise showed his contempt for you. You were further influenced by your need, and the fact that the Barnard property at Dunelm ought to have come into your possession—that at least you thought so ; you were deceived in this,

though the true facts did not alter your malicious feelings."

"I can't do it, Cuffing," said Ransford, with suppressed agitation.

"Not at the price?"

"No," said Ransford.

"But it is true. Eh?"

"Some of it; you make me feel a wretched cur."

"Don't attempt to stifle the truthful promptings of your heart," said Cuffing, with a sneer. "But we have no time for discussion; your fate will be decided within the next hour. Now hear me out. To continue then. Being arrested and charged at Bow Street, you strengthened your first falsehoods by others in the hope of obtaining an acquittal; you confess that the questions relative to the Argyle, Cremorne, Brighton, and other places were purely fiction, not true in any particular." ["Put by my lawyer," Ransford remarked, parenthetically, Cuffing disregarding the observation entirely.] "That you are now suffering the pangs of remorse, and make

this free, full, and voluntary confession and retraction, in spite of all the consequences that may accrue from such a confession ; and that you will repeat it at Bow Street if required as fully and as freely as you sign the deposition now witnessed by —by—let me see—by my clerk.”

“You want to sell me——” exclaimed Ransford excitedly.

“I do not. Lord St. Barnard shall undertake not to prosecute, shall pay you ten thousand pounds, and let you go free ; I will arrange all that. You further state in this document that you appeal to Lord St. Barnard to allow you to leave England, in order that you may be free from the personal influence of the social disgrace which would attach to you in this country on the publication of such a document. But you throw yourself on the mercy of his lordship. You give him full permission to publish your deposition, or make whatever use of it he may deem desirable or necessary.”

“I don’t know what to do,” said Rans-

ford, leaving his seat, in spite of Cuffing's commands to sit still.

"Yes you do," said Cuffing. "Three thousand pounds and liberty makes up your mind."

"You bind yourself in no way; if you would put a line in, confessing that you——"

"Don't rave; you are losing the very little judgment you possess. I must be free to advise as your advocate, free as I am in law and in conscience. Now listen. I have drawn up a document in accordance with all I have said to you; and now to explain how it shall be signed and delivered up. His lordship will be here in ten minutes. You will see him alone and make your terms. You may haggle as you please, both of you; say what you like, but the terms are ten thousand pounds; and so far as you and I are concerned I will not be ungenerous. I consent to receive six thousand—but of that by-and-by. When he agrees to the terms he shall make an appointment for to-morrow to

ratify the agreement and settle on the form of the document which shall then be signed and witnessed. Afterwards we shall meet at a little public on the Thames below Erith, where we catch the steamer for Dieppe and Ostend, and get out of the country."

"You will go with me?"

"I will. Did I not tell you I would stand by you to the last?"

"You are such a strange fellow, I don't know when you are in earnest and when you are sneering at me."

"Now before the document is signed," said Cuffing, "I will have Lord St. Bernard's written promise not to molest you—of course he cannot molest me—and we shall make assurance doubly sure by getting comfortably out of the kingdom. Yesterday I went quietly down to Erith and made my arrangements. Did you ever hear of the Cuttle Fish Hotel?"

"Never," said Ransford.

"Just below Erith, almost opposite Purfleet, a famous little house among members

of the P. R. Well, I was there, I tell you, yesterday ; and my plans are perfect. Now which is it to be : liberty and plenty of money in your pocket, or imprisonment, chains, the hulks, and gruel ?”

Ransford shuddered, and put out his hand. Cuffing took it as if the action was a matter of legal form.

“ As you please ; I leave myself in your hands ; I am helpless ; let us be true to each other.”


A footstep was heard on the stair. Then came a knock at the door. The next moment Lord St. Barnard was in the room. Ransford rose, but had to support himself. His knees trembled.

“ I will now leave you two gentlemen together,” said Cuffing, with complete self-possession. “ If you require my services upon any legal or technical point you will find me in the adjoining room—kindly tap at the wall and I will be with you in an instant.”

Lord St. Barnard nodded his acquiescence, and Mr. Cuffing left the room.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE COMPROMISE.

“HAT have you to say to me?” Lord St. Barnard asked, confronting his trembling persecutor.

“I hardly know,” said Ransford, clutching the back of the chair upon which he had been sitting.

“You may be sure I should not be here unless I had received very explicit information and definite undertakings from your solicitor, Mr. Cuffing.”

“That is quite right, no doubt,” said Ransford, beginning to master his nervousness under the calm demeanour of Lord St. Barnard ; “but the matter is of so delicate

a nature, that you must pardon me if I feel some difficulty in entering upon it abruptly as it were."

"I see no reason, no excuse, sir, for introductory approaches to the subject upon which I was requested to visit this place; I am here to do business as a business man, on a business invitation; but since you evidently desire preliminary courtesies let me remark upon the sacrifice of honour and dignity I make in accepting this interview."

"I quite feel that," said Ransford interrupting his lordship. "We will not enter upon it, however; or angry feelings may arise, and, as you say, this is a business meeting."

"Well?"

"At the same time, I hope I may be entitled to a little credit for giving you an opportunity, should arrangements follow this meeting, to wipe out a stain which might attach to you for ever."

"Some stains are never obliterated, sir; but there is no necessity for compliments



on either side—you propose to confess to all the details of your conspiracy?”

“Do I?” said Ransford, the courage of the coward coming back, when he saw that Lord St. Barnard was not likely to lose his temper.

“So I was informed.”

“Then you have been misinformed,” said Ransford. “I understand that Lady St. Barnard has gone away, and so far as I am concerned the probability is not only that I shall be discharged, but that practically your wife will be condemned, and that society at large——”

Lord St. Barnard found it difficult to listen calmly to Ransford; but he had gone to Cassel Street with the full determination of accepting calmly any position in which he might be placed, to reconnoitre the crisis, to probe its secret, to do his best for the honour of his wife and the reputation of his house. Ever since he had received Lady St. Barnard's letter his mind had been racked by a thousand misgivings. One moment his judgment condemned her;

then his heart set her up again pure as she was fair. He had suffered all the torments of jealousy combined with the bitterness which comes out of the ingratitude, or supposed ingratitude, of those whom we love, or of those for whom we have made personal sacrifices. Looking judicially at Lady St. Barnard's conduct, and gathering up some of the circumstances in her career which she acknowledged as true, even her husband could not refrain from doubts, though it almost drove him mad to think of her as guilty. Her letter was a terrible blow. Lord St. Barnard saw in Mr. Holland's face while he read it a full belief in her dishonour ; and it was the thought that the world would at once get ready to stone her that aroused his sympathy and love and kept him still close to the task of clearing her reputation. He had not dared to go to Grassnook. The sight of his children would have unmanned him quite. It is impossible to say whether he thought her guilty or not ; he could not have confessed himself truly on the subject, even on

his knees. His opinion varied, and he caught at every favouring straw floating on the dark stream of evidence which had been recorded against her.

“As I said before, sir, I have no desire to discuss preliminaries ; let us get to the business of our meeting. What do you propose ?”

“This,” said Ransford, “without at the present moment going into the particulars of my explanation of this unfortunate affair, which I am ready to do at the proper time ; I will sign a document, whether true or not I do not say and will not say at this moment, denying the whole of the charges I have brought against Lady St. Barnard and stating that the prosecution was malicious, and in short clearing up the entire matter, in consideration of the payment of fifteen thousand pounds.”

“It is a large sum ; your solicitor said a few thousands.”

“Well, fifteen are only a few to you, but a fortune to me. Mr. Cuffing says ten

thousand ; I say fifteen. It will enable me to live abroad and never trouble you again."

"Say ten thousand," said his lordship, more for the purpose of not appearing over anxious than out of any consideration for the money.

"If you value your wife's honour and your own peace only at ten thousand, then——"

"Say no more ; I am most anxious to keep my temper ; let the amount be fifteen thousand pounds."

"Very well," said Ransford, in a whisper ; "don't let Cuffing know that it is more than ten."

"I will be no party to a conspiracy to defraud Cuffing out of his share of the plunder," said his lordship, contemptuously.

"Oh," said Ransford, "then you need not say anything about the money—you will have to pay it to me, and I can arrange with Cuffing."

"You will meet my solicitor, of course, and have the document properly drawn."

"I will not," said Ransford. "I have quite enough to do with my own solicitor. No, thank you ; besides, it is not necessary."

"How?"

"If you agree to my terms, it is not."

"I do agree," said his lordship.

"Well, then, to-morrow I will meet you here and lay before you the document."

"You will make another statutory declaration if necessary?"

"I will do everything you wish. Is that satisfactory?"

"Yes."

"Then I will call Mr. Cuffing." Ransford tapped at the wall and Cuffing entered the room.

"Well," said Cuffing, blandly, "have you settled this painful business?"

"We have," said Ransford.

"On the ground and in the manner you explained to me?" asked Cuffing, with an innocent look at Lord St. Barnard.

"Yes," said Ransford.

"Very well," said Cuffing, handing Lord

St. Barnard a seat, and taking the business at once into his own hands.

“ I will give you an outline of Mr. Ransford’s confession, or deposition, or whatever we may elect to call it.”

Mr. Cuffing thereupon read from notes the heads of the document he had already sketched out in his conversation with Ransford. Lord St. Barnard listened with undisguised emotion.

“ Now here, my lord,” continued Mr. Cuffing, “ is a written undertaking which you will sign, foregoing the prosecution of Philip Ransford, and undertaking not to interfere with him in the future. You do not object ?”

“ No.”

“ I knew that would be your answer, and besides your hand and seal I shall have your word of honour.”

“ You have all the guarantees a gentleman can give,” said his lordship.

“ Gentleman and nobleman,” said Cuffing. “ Well, then, you will kindly do me the honour to come here at four o’clock to-

morrow ; you shall see the document signed, and you shall then meet us at the Cuttle Fish Hotel on the river, where you will bring the money in Bank of England notes—a few hundreds in gold—and Mr. Ransford will hand you the document. That will enable him to take a steamer in the river and at once leave the country. He does not desire this through any fear that you will not keep your word, but in order that he may at once act upon the contract between you, and give you as good evidence of his *bona fides* as you give of yours."

"Do you think all this precaution necessary?" asked Lord St. Barnard.

"Desirable, if not exactly necessary—and I will ask your lordship not to object," said Cuffing.

"The Cuttle Fish Hotel," repeated Lord St. Barnard, reflectively.

"Yes," said Cuffing; "it stands in the reach, nearly opposite Purfleet, and about a mile by boat from the new hotel at Erith."

"I know it. My friend Northbrook

has a yacht lying off Erith at this very moment," said his lordship. "I have no doubt he would allow the captain to weigh and take you wherever you wished."

"No, thank you; we have made our own arrangements, both for Mr. Ransford's safety and your own peace and comfort, if your lordship will kindly agree to them."

"Be it so," said his lordship.

"Then to-morrow, your lordship, to sign—here at four o'clock; at nine o'clock we meet at the Cuttle Fish to receive the money and exchange documents. Take the train at Charing Cross for Erith; a boat from the pier, and the landlord will expect you. There is another way—by train from the City to Purfleet, but Erith is our route; we can explain more fully to-morrow. We quite understand each other?"

"Quite," said Lord St. Barnard, "quite."

"Then we will say good evening to your lordship," said Cuffing, opening the door.

Lord St. Barnard bowed stiffly and left the room. Cuffing and Ransford listened to his footsteps.



"Dick," said Cuffing, quickly tapping at the wall, a signal which was answered at once by a young ferret-eyed clerk a little out at elbows—"Dick, watch him till he goes to his hotel."

"Right," said Dick, gliding out of the room like a shadow.

Cuffing went to the window and saw Lord St. Barnard turn into Holborn, with Dick following warily in his wake.

## CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE GOLDEN GATES OF THE SUNNY  
WEST.



ON the report of the physician, Kalmat felt bound to postpone his departure from Boulogne until the afternoon. Lady St. Barnard was seriously ill. The doctors pronounced the malady to be brain fever ; the symptoms, however, were not more than usually alarming. Arranging for bulletins to be telegraphed to him, he left the lady in the hands of the doctors and arrived in London at midnight. Driving to his quarters, he took his portmanteau and went to the Westminster Palace Hotel.

"Is Lord St. Barnard staying here?"

"Yes," said the porter.

"I am a friend of his. Is he up?"

"Yes, sir."

"Take my luggage—I want a sitting-room and bedroom *en suite*."

Having made a rapid toilette, Kalmat sent a message to Lord St. Barnard.

"Say that a traveller who has just arrived from the Continent wishes to see him on very important business."

"His lordship will see you," was the reply.

When the stranger was ushered into the room Lord St. Barnard rose and looked at him inquiringly.

"I fear I disturb you at this late hour; but the bearer of good news is never unwelcome, come when he may."

There was a hearty cheeriness in the speaker's manner which roused Lord St. Barnard as the sound of a trumpet in the ear of the soldier.

"Sir," said his lordship, "there is the ring of hope and comfort in your voice.

Whom have I the honour of addressing?"

"You have seen me before?"

"I think I have had that pleasure, but where I cannot at the moment"——

"In the police court—every day until to-day."

"Yes," said his lordship quickly; "you spoke of good news."

"Give me your hand," said Kalmat.

Lord St. Barnard put out his hand. It was grasped heartily.

"I come from your wife," said Kalmat, his great eyes opening wide with sympathy.

"Indeed!" exclaimed his lordship eagerly; "where is she? how is she?"

"Safe and in good hands."

"Thank God."

"Not only safe, but innocent; the true noble wife you believe her to be?" said Kalmat warmly, but not without inquiring looks.

"Believed," said his lordship sadly. "I do not know what I think, what I believe to-day."

"Her flight has troubled you ; it looks like guilt ; it is not—it is brain fever, St. Barnard. She is as innocent of the foul charges brought against her as she was when first I knew her as Mary Waller, the best and loveliest of girls in that old city of the north, of which she was the light, the sunshine."

"You are indeed a welcome visitor ; you set my heart beating with new hope, new life ; you make me long to see my children for the first time to-day. Who are you ?"

"During this trial," said Kalmat, "you have heard of a Dunelm student who——"

"Yes, yes," said his lordship eagerly.

"I am that Dunelm student—Tom Mayfield," said Kalmat, drawing himself up to his full height.

"My God !" exclaimed Lord St. Barnard. "This is indeed a day of surprises. Give me your hand, sir. You are truly a welcome visitor."

The two men shook hands warmly, and Lord St. Barnard pointed to a chair.

"Pray be seated," said his lordship.

"There is something in your manner which tells me that you do bring good news, that the first gleam of daylight comes with you. Do you believe in instinct?"

"I fear it is my chief belief," said Kalmat. "My only mistakes in life have been when I have disregarded what is erroneously called instinct. The only injury that comes from intellectual cultivation is that book-learning makes us mistrust our instincts."

"Listening to your voice, looking at your earnest face," said his lordship, "something whispers to me that you will restore the happiness of Grassnook; but I dare not hope so much—it is impossible."

"I do not know," said Kalmat, "but I have great news for you. I have watched the case at Bow Street from the first. Arriving in England after long years of exile in the western wilds of America, my first greeting was an account in the newspapers of the statutory declaration made by that scoundrel Ransford. I came to have my title to some sort of fame endorsed by

the great capital of civilization, as the author of some poor but earnest verses inspired by the sun-lands of the Golden West."

"Then," said his lordship, "your *nom de plume* is Kalmat ; you are the new poet ; we know you well at Grassnook."

"Yes, I am Kalmat," said the visitor sadly, "but dismiss me in your mind and on your tongue in that character. I am unknown to a soul. My arrival in London was my own secret until this moment. Keep it religiously—I have reasons for asking this."

"My dear sir, you have my word."

"To return to my arrival in England. It seemed as if Fate had brought me here with a purpose, as if I had been led homewards by an unseen hand. And when I read the newspaper, before I had been in London half an hour, I saw the situation and accepted the challenge. I maintained my incognito ; I was Fate's detective, the great Arbiter's instrument ; my instinct told me so. Day after day I stood in

court, waiting for my instructions, waiting the mysterious but certain direction which I felt sure would come to me. I saw your wife breaking down, I was present when the last blow was struck, I did not, for her sake, for yours, shoot her traducer where he stood, because his time is not yet. I saw the persecuted woman leave the Westminster Palace Hotel on Sunday. I noticed the wild expression of her eyes."

"I thought there was something peculiar in her face and manner, but——"

"Indians and dogs are good physiognomists," said Kalmat. "I have learnt their trick of observation."

"I ought not to have let her go," said his lordship in a tone of deep regret, "but I had very important business with my lawyers, and with Mr. Holland; it was absolutely necessary that I should remain in town. I dispatched White and another detective to trace her, but have been unable to move myself, having had negotiations in hand in connection with the case."

"You did not doubt her?"



"I fear I did. Even now I hardly know what to think," said his lordship, rising from his seat and pacing the room; "but proceed, Mr. Mayfield, with your statement."

"I followed her to the station; I never lost sight of her. I travelled by the same train to Folkestone, by the same boat to Boulogne; I rested at the same hotel. I could see that she was suffering from the first symptoms of brain fever. Yesterday morning she was really ill. Having secured for her the best medical attendance in Boulogne and telegraphed for a physician from Paris, and made other arrangements befitting her rank and necessary to her condition, I came direct to you."

Lord St. Barnard laid his hand upon Kalmat's shoulder and thanked him in broken utterances.

"No thanks, Barnard, no thanks, and excuse my familiarity; it means no disrespect; we had no lords out in the West, and I cannot bring myself as yet down to the commonplaces of civilization."

"You have earned the right to equality with the noblest," said his lordship, "as a poet, as a man. I cannot tell you how deeply I feel your great kindness. And is she progressing well, do you think? Is she in any danger?"

"No, she will recover," said Kalmat, "you must write to her, and if she is well enough to read the letter, the doctors will give it to her—I so directed before I left."

"I will write at once," said Lord St. Barnard.

"Presently—there is time enough. I was about to say that I regretted leaving London at the moment when your wife's flight took me away, because I was on the eve of discovering the woman who was in attendance on that wretched night at the Piccadilly Chambers. I have no doubt in my mind, not a shadow of doubt, that I shall clear up the most malicious of the charges brought against your wife. It was I who sent you the documents from Boulogne."

"You amaze as much as you delight me," said his lordship. "Those documents gave us a decided victory over the principal attack in the statutory declaration. And shall we be indebted to you for the final triumph?"

"I do not say that, so far as the world is concerned, but I can clear up your doubts. Nevertheless, my dear friend, whatever we may do, however much of the matter we may put straight, and in spite of the lady's perfect innocence, which I can illustrate to you in a thousand ways, we must not disguise from ourselves that your position for years to come in this country will be unbearable. Oblivion for a century could not efface from my memory the petty annoyances of society as I saw the system at work in my young days at Dunelm. I have lived on the happy border-land of civilization, outside the pale of even so-called religious influences, and have learnt to despise your narrow lessons of society; but you who are a nobleman, a belted earl, a pillar of the State, you who have been

educated in the rosewater atmosphere of aristocratic manners, you who breathe the rarefied air of an old blue society, you can never bear the slights that will be put upon you—if not upon you, upon your wife. Come what come may, England, ay Europe, worn out with custom, stiff with ceremony, will be hateful to you beneath the shadow which has fallen upon your name and hers.”

“We will live it down ; we will show by our conduct that——”

“No, no,” said Kalmat, interrupting his lordship, “you will not ; but we will discuss this subject by-and-by. Meanwhile let the advice which is the offspring of my reasoning instinct sink into your mind. When we have cleared the affair up to your own satisfaction, and done our best to impress the world with the righteousness of our opinion, quit England for ten years, live abroad, not on the continent of Europe, not within the pale of society, not in the sordid atmosphere of European Courts, but far away across the broad

Atlantic, in that beautiful land within the gates of the golden West, where thought is free, where the sun is beset with no fogs of yellow pestilence, where the roses bloom by the river's brink, where the tangled vine gives its uncultured fruit to all who like to take it, where the land is broad and open, the lakes blue and deep, the valleys draped with pines—a land of gold lying towards the sun and bosomed in verdure beneath the mighty Olympus of the Indian."

Kalimat's eyes flashed as his mind wandered back to the sunny lands. He raised his arm with the free natural action of an inspired enthusiast. Lord St. Barnard's fancy caught the sparks that fell from Kalimat's fertile brain.

"You set me longing to see your wonderful new world," said his lordship; "you fire me with rising hopes, with dreams that seem to belong to boyhood. Your words are in my heart like seeds that in due time will grow and blossom. Meanwhile it is

best we look at the passing moment. It is now my turn to surprise you."

His lordship thereupon explained to Kalmat all that had transpired since Lady St. Barnard's departure—his interviews with Cuffing and Ransford, and his arrangements for the morrow.

Kalmat argued all round the position, and recognized to the full the importance of possessing the document.

"It may be well to reconnoitre the place," he said presently. "I will get up early and go down there."

"Our arrangement is that I go alone."

"Yes, truly ; but I will be near you. We can embark for the French coast, as well as they, from Erith. Our intention is to go thither, I take it, to get to Boulogne the moment this business is at an end."

"Certainly."

"We shall be there as soon as your letter ; do not write. Did you not say that your friend has a yacht off Erith ?"

"Yes."

"Sit down and give me a line to him ;

if we miss the steamer, we can fall back on his kindness."

"Would it not be best to go by train ? even the next morning would land us there as soon as the yacht."

"No," said Kalmat, firmly ; "you must trust this matter to me. Carry out your arrangement with these villains, and leave the rest in my hands. Can you not trust me ?"


"Ay, with my life," said his lordship. "I surrender to you my judgment, for there is something in your earnestness that captivates me. From this moment, my dear friend, I lean upon you."

"You shall find in me a safe support," said Kalmat ; "and now good-night ; you will probably see me no more until to-morrow night, when we leave the Cuttle Fish Hotel for Boulogne."

"Good-night," said his lordship, with a warm grasp of the hand ; "you have lifted a heavy weight from my heart. Sleep well, and let me see you, if possible, in the morning."

## CHAPTER VII.

### KALMAT EXAMINES HIS REVOLVER.

“ SHALL kill him, Clytie,” said the poet from the golden West, addressing the bust, that once more stood white and cold in the lamplight, confronting the worshipper ; for the moment Kalmat returned to his room he unlocked the casket and brought forth the symbol of his love.

“ I shall kill him. Fate has ordained it. I am the messenger from afar. The Great Master has need of me. I am here, and the thrice damned culprit dies the death.”

Kalmat drew from his pocket a revolver, and toyed with it grimly.



“ Ah ! dear friend, you and I have had work to do in our time. A man does not fight his way from sea to sea, and live for months outside the influence of women and children, without playing his part actively in the great tragedy of life ; but your bright quick glance, your scathing fire, your penetrating and deadly reproof, never had more worthy victim than the one who is now walking blindfold to his doom.”

He laid the pistol on the table, and turned again to the bust.

“ Look cold and relentless, my Clytie ; let no softness steal into the dimples of your mouth. I would have you as fixed as Fate, as relentless as the marble. Nay, do not look sad. And if you do, 'twill only clench my purpose more firmly. I think of the olden days by the northern river ; I hear the familiar bells ; I see the half-timid, half-trusting look in the eyes of your poor dead grandfather ; the strains of the organ come back to me, the scent of flowers, the gentle sunshine flitting on the

Cathedral Green and mounting up the great tower back to the sky. I see the coming shadow, the blighting figure of Philip Ransford, growing, growing, obliterating the sun, crushing out the flowers, blasting hope, murdering innocence. Oh ! my Clytie, what hadst thou done in thy youth, what hadst thy forefathers done, that so much bitterness should be put into thy cup ! What had I done that I too should drink of it to the dregs !”

He turned the figure round and looked at the calm sweet face ; but his mind was far away. He saw himself, as he might look upon some other being, and he was sorry for himself, sorry for her, grieved on account of old Waller’s sufferings ; and presently sadness came back to hate, and Kalmat laid his hand upon his pistol and smiled.

“ They have arranged to have this house entirely to themselves, your husband said—the landlord is a sort of long-shore man, and he has to signal the steamer. Good. Now if I can only get Ransford to come

there alone, half an hour or even a quarter of an hour before the appointed time. Yes, I have it."

Kalmat went to his writing-case, and proceeded to write.

"On second thoughts, a telegram would be best. No, both might be traced. I will leave the arrangement to Fate. It will all come right. Clytie, you shall be avenged. The Great Architect will take care of that. His punishments are not postponed, as the believers in creeds and formularies imagine. The wicked make their own halts, load the executioner's rifle; they do not always wait for the verdict of the other world. It is brutal to talk of blood to you, so fair, and white, and spotless. *Au revoir!* the light is breaking. There are some years of happiness yet in store for all of us."

Kalmat kissed the bust, and replaced it in its case. Then he filled his pipe and smoked, losing himself in reflections concerning the next day. He sat there long into the night. Daylight had indeed

dawned upon London before he put out the light and flung himself upon the bed.

At seven o'clock he rose, washed, packed his portmanteau, ordered breakfast, consulted a time-table, and presently called a cab for Paddington, where he was duly deposited. He booked himself for a train then waiting for Bristol; but instead of going by it, he presently seemed to be arriving from some other train, got into a hansom, and drove to Charing Cross. There he booked for Erith, and took a boat for the "Fairy," a pretty little steam yacht lying off the pier. Carrying a message to the master from Lord St. Barnard, Kalmat had the vessel placed at his disposal. He ordered steam to be got up and the yacht to lie off Purfleet ready to steam out of the river at nine to await his and Lord St. Barnard's coming.

It was a wet, drizzling day, and Kalmat could all the better study the scene of action. As his boat lurched clumsily down the river, pulled by a couple of men from the yacht, Philip Ransford, muffled in a

pea-jacket, came lounging out of the solitary public-house standing alone in Longreach. Neither of the men, however, knew each other. The misty rain prevented any recognition ; but Philip, as well as Kalmat, had his plans to mature. Like the poet, he too had passed a restless night, endeavouring to concoct some safe scheme for securing the whole of the money which was to be the price of his confession, and with Fate at his elbow, making Kalmat's scheme of vengeance easy of accomplishment. Ransford had lain awake most of the night inventing plans for leaving Cuffing outside the arrangement. Already he had occasion to congratulate himself upon his sagacity. He had named fifteen thousand pounds instead of ten, and the figures were accepted. Success made him bolder. Why should Cuffing have a penny of the money? Had he not led him into the difficulty? And had he not treated him shamefully, sneering at him, cursing him, and even going so far as to threaten his life? Ransford grew almost dignified in his resent-

ment. He would punish this legal cur. To trick him out of his share of the plunder would be a sweet revenge. Everything seemed favourable to this. Cuffing had consented that Ransford should have possession of the document and receive the money. How could he contrive to keep the appointment at the Cuttle Fish without Cuffing? His first idea was to make the lawyer intoxicated. They were to have luncheon at two o'clock, and then together meet Lord St. Barnard at Cuffing's office for the purpose of signing the document. That rendered the idea of making Cuffing drunk, feasible but difficult. Besides Cuffing would be wary. After the meeting they were quietly to pack their trunks, and in the evening go to Erith and thence take a boat for the Cuttle Fish. Cuffing had arranged that they were to have the house to themselves. He knew the landlord well, having defended him in more than one prosecution connected with the P. R. Cuffing's knowledge of the place put Ransford at a disadvantage, but he could be


even with him by an early visit to the Cuttle Fish. His latest and approved plan was to induce Lord St. Barnard to be at the place of meeting an hour before the appointed time and give Cuffing the slip. How this latter part of the scheme was to be accomplished he could not decide ; but before going to bed he wrote a private letter to Lord St. Barnard telling him that whatever time might be arranged on the morrow for meeting at the Cuttle Fish to come an hour earlier in order that he might have an opportunity of putting his lordship in full possession of the whole of the circumstances of the case before Cuffing's arrival, the lawyer having objected to his doing more than hand to his lordship the document agreed upon. Then early the next morning Ransford went down to the Cuttle Fish, and surveyed the river and its approaches. The landlord was not at home. He had gone to Gravesend and would not be back till night. A boy was left in charge of the house. There were no signs of business, and what chiefly impressed itself on Rans-

ford's mind was that the house could only be reached by boat. If you landed at Erith and attempted it from that direction there was a nasty creek to cross, up which the tide ran rapidly, leaving at the ebb a sea of mud. If he could only cut off Cuffing's approach by water and leave him to struggle over the creek and be smothered! Ransford chuckled at the thought, and pictured himself hailing the steamer, getting snugly on board, and making Ostend or Dieppe the next day.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### CASTLES IN SPAIN.

T was a feverish day for all parties concerned, the day on which the confession of Philip Ransford was signed at Mr. Cuffing's chambers ; but to no one was it so exciting as to the late prisoner of Bow Street. This person had fully matured his plans for terminating the business in such a way as to make him entire master of the situation. He was a coward it is true, and his scheme as finally settled upon was worthy of a really strong and characteristic villain, such an one as Cuffing might have admired ; but curs, and worms, and other wretched things are reputed to turn upon

their tormentors sometimes, and Ransford was sufficiently contemptible for comparison. As we have already shown he was exercised throughout the night with schemes for Cuffing's discomfiture. He built all kinds of castles in the air, and never put the lawyer into one of them. No, he would have all the money himself, and thus pay off the score of humiliation which Cuffing had heaped upon him. Ransford wondered at his own temerity, and could hardly realize in himself the man of determination who rose up with a firm and definite resolution on this last feverish day of the Bow Street history. It seemed as if some of Cuffing's spirit had found its way into the Ransford constitution.

The lawyer had noticed a change in his client's manner, a certain freedom of look which was new to him ; but this might be the natural result of his escape from imprisonment. This, at all events, was Cuffing's verdict after duly weighing the question. Nevertheless he said to himself the

fellow is a miserable sneak, and after the signing of the papers it would be best not to part company with him until the transaction was complete.

"When you have packed your bag you can come with me to my chambers, and we will take a cab together to the station," said Phil, humouring this evident desire of his friend.

"Good," said Cuffing; "our train goes at eight."

"Yes," replied Ransford, quietly remarking to himself that there was also one at seven.

"His lordship seemed in good spirits," continued Cuffing, who was tearing up letters and putting his desk in order.

"Yes; he thinks it is all right; I wish him joy of his lady," said Ransford, lolling on the back of a chair.

"You are a brute, Ransford. Can't you shut up now that you have at last told the truth and brought the business to an end?"

"I am not a brute, Cuffing; and now

that the business is at an end, as you say, I will thank you to address me in a different tone to that which you have so long assumed."

"Indeed," said Cuffing, looking up. "Come into my bedroom while I finish putting up my wardrobe for our interesting journey, and we will discuss the point further."

Ransford lighted a cigar and followed his friend into the adjoining room, where Cuffing emptied the contents of a narrow chest of drawers into a capacious carpet-bag, waiting every now and then to fold some article of clothing with special care.

"Now what is it you say, Ransford, about my manner towards you?" he asked presently, taking a seat on the edge of the bed and contemplating his companion with a fixed and inquiring look.

"That you are to be civil, my friend, and consider that we are now no longer solicitor and client, but friends, companions, what you will."

"You are right," said the lawyer, care-

lessly. "There's my hand. You have offered me yours frequently during our acquaintance; I give you mine now in token of good faith."

Ransford looked astonished, and did not respond as promptly as he might have done.

"Why, what is this?" exclaimed Cuffing, quickly. "Has my frankness surprised you? or have you a lingering desire to be treacherous which obstructs the usual gush of your nature?"

"My dear Cuffing, you surprised me by your sudden kindness," said Ransford. "I take your hand with all the sincerity in life." [Shaking his hand warmly.] "To have your hand in mine thus has long been the dearest wish of my heart. If men who have fought such a fight as ours are not true and faithful to each other there is no friendship left in the world."

Cuffing looked doubtfully at Phil, and proceeded to lock his bag.

"True," he said, presently, "it is our interest to stick to each other, and there is

no reason why we should not have a pleasant time together abroad. My idea is to settle down in some quiet Italian village and study art. You smile; but I am in earnest. Perhaps you may be safer in Spain. I don't know. I think we can trust this lord; men in his position are superstitious about their word of honour, as they call it."

"I am your man for a good time together. I don't mean to risk much, but I should like to have a look at the green cloth and my friend the croupier," said Phil.

"Well, as you please; I do not intend to risk a cent. I rather think I will study for the Italian bar; that is not a bad idea, eh? Or perhaps I will marry some pretty woman with money and have an Italian farm. I am sick of this grimy London, where even summer is beastly."

"Don't like London?"

"No."

"Not if you had plenty of money?"

"Not even then."

"A successful lawyer, and a man of capital; why London is the very place for you."

"Not after destroying my character in a case such as that in which I have recently been engaged."

"Your character, Cuffing!" remarked Ransford, making the observation as mild as possible, with a laugh.

"Yes, my character. Until I met you I was a poor miserable devil it is true, but not a conspirator, not a cur, not a black-mailer."

"Oh, indeed," said Ransford, "what were you then, my friend, since we are discussing the subject?"

"Not the son of a twopenny-half-penny weaver, who born of the gutter returned to the gutter in due course, and inspired his son with the family sentiment which even Cambridge could not obliterate," said Cuffing, looking defiance and menace with every word, which he fired off at Ransford like pistol shots.

"And this is the sort of language which

you consider a fitting accompaniment to shaking of hands between two men whose interests are identical, and who contemplate a long journey together," responded Ransford, deprecatingly.

"A long journey," said Cuffing; "do you know that 'You have a long journey before you,' is a cue for the murder in the highly romantic melodrama of 'Jack Sheppard?'"

"I don't know what you mean," said Ransford, but he shuddered and looked suddenly round the room.

Cuffing laughed aloud. It was a strange hissing kind of laugh. Ransford had never heard it before, and he was startled. For a moment the deeply-laid scheme of the night and the morning vanished.

"And I was actually giving you credit for the courage of treachery!" exclaimed Cuffing, laying his hand upon Ransford's arm. "Why you are trembling all over. There, forgive me; I didn't mean to frighten you. Let us shake hands again. I apologize for wronging you even



in thought. It entered into my imagination for a moment that you were after all something more than a coward. There, I apologize."

Cuffing shook Ransford's hand, Phil remaining passive.

"Are we friends again?"

"Yes," said Phil, recovering himself, and once more gripping his scheme of vengeance and thinking that the incident which had just occurred would favour his designs if he only had pluck enough to strike the blow at the proper time.

"I have said hard things, more in jest than earnest."

"You have a facility for being hard," said Ransford.

"Have I? In my youth I was treated badly, and I suppose the trail of that serpent is still upon me. My father died without a will, and my elder brother robbed the family, and drank himself to death, and cut up insolvent. I ought to have been a rich man."

"So ought I for that matter."

"You have been rich," said Cuffing, quickly ; "you have had your turn. If I were once rich I would never be poor again."

"You think so. All men think in that way. It is like the old proverb that every man thinks every other man mortal but himself. Rich men fancy it is impossible they can ever be poor."

"Let me once be rich and I will forgive Fate and everybody if I am ever poor again. Success is the secret of happiness and power. Money means success. If you have gold you have ability, genius. 'What a clever man Cuffing is,' people would say ; 'it is true he soiled his fingers in that slander case, but that was a mistake, an error of the heart, not of the head.'"

"I am sure I hope you may be rich some day," said Ransford.

"Some day!—to-night," said Cuffing ; "a few thousand pounds means riches to a man with resources—to a man of an ingenious turn of mind. It shall be a race

with you and I which makes most of our money. I will back myself to get more power, influence, and prosperity out of mine in twelve months, than you will in ten years."

"We shall see," said Ransford, once more screwing his courage up to his great plot; "is it not time we went to Piccadilly?"

"It is only half-past five," said Cuffing; "though I am quite ready, for that matter."

"Come, then, it will be a change; we shall only be quarrelling again if we stay here, and supposing we have time on our hands we can turn into the Haymarket and have a game at billiards."

"As you please," said Cuffing, "but you are sulking."

"No I'm not, I have accepted your apology," said Ransford, with a surly expression that was not lost on the lawyer.

The two men went out together, Cuffing carefully locking the rooms and leaving the key in the door.

"I have sold all my furniture and things

to a broker, a fellow I once saved from transportation," said Cuffing; "and he paid me this morning. He is coming to clear out the place at seven o'clock. He did not like parting with his money beforehand, but he had to do it."

"You generally make people do just as you please," said Ransford.

"That is my way," said Cuffing, "it is simply a triumph of mind over matter."

Yet there was an assumption of superiority in Ransford's manner which puzzled Cuffing. He took snuff twice with special reference to some strange new phase of Ransford's character.

"I'm studying you," said Cuffing, stopping on the stairs to look once more into the face of his client, "for the last time before we start out on this great expedition: you have changed very much since yesterday."

"For the better, I hope," said Ransford, with a smile.

"I don't know," said Cuffing. "You are more self-possessed, except when I knocked

you off your balance a short time since ; yet with this new fit of self-possession you seem to be excited and nervous. Have you anything on your mind ?”

“Not I—my mind has got rid of its incubus.”

“Ah ! you mean to go straight ?”

“So help me——” began Ransford, suddenly.

“No, don’t swear. I will not put you on your oath ; but, my dear friend, always remember that so long as you are true you are safe and may be happy ; but——”

“If I am not,” said Ransford, interrupting him in his turn, “you will shoot me : you have said so before. All right, we understand each other. Come along ; I’ll carry your bag into Holborn, and then we will have a cab.”

Phil Ransford’s chambers were the attics in one of the tallest houses in Piccadilly. The house had only recently been converted into chambers, and some of the rooms were not yet let. Indeed, with the exception of the attics, the two top stories

were empty. If the two rooms had been well furnished, the attics would have been pleasant enough in their way as bachelor's quarters. They were shut off from the rest of the house, and consisted of rooms front and back ; the only objection to the bedroom being that it was lighted from overhead with what is called a skylight.

"It would be deuced awkward if there was a fire," said Cuffing.

"Not if it rained as fast as it does now," said Ransford, looking up at the window in the roof, upon which the rain was falling with a steady monotonous clatter. "That would put out any fire."

"It is a curious room," continued Cuffing.

"If there was a fire," said Ransford, "I could get upon the roof in two minutes—it is flat just at the ledge of the slope of the window, and you can walk along the coping comfortably into the adjoining houses. If I had continued very hard up, I think I should have made an outside journey and helped myself."

Cuffing took snuff and smiled, as Ransford smoked and chatted about his rooms and packed a small hand-bag.

"I am only going to take a change of linen," said Ransford. "Can employ a score of tailors out yonder over the water, when we are in possession of our fortune."

"You astonish me," said Cuffing.

"That is, indeed, a compliment," Ransford replied. "You surprised me a short time since."

"Frightened you?" said Cuffing, smiling, and rubbing his eye-glass.

"A little," said Ransford; "you always strike me as such a desperate character when you are angry. And then that infernal revolver. Were you ever in America?"

"Yes," said Cuffing, at the same time showing Ransford an American pocket at the back of his trousers, with the handle of a pistol plainly visible.

"I thought so," said Ransford, wetting his lips; his mouth was becoming dry with the anxiety of the coming crisis.

"You think nothing of shooting a fellow down in America," said Cuffing, taking snuff and watching Ransford's face.

"I suppose not," said Ransford, turning his back upon Cuffing, apparently to continue his packing, but in reality to hide his face from the lawyer's scrutiny, and to pull himself together.

Cuffing occupied himself for the moment with once more reckoning up the position. His instinct put down Ransford's change of manner to treachery, but his judgment threw out the bill. When he reflected that Ransford's safety could be imperilled by hostile action at any time on his part, and when he remembered that, if Ransford held the key to Lord St. Barnard's money, he carried the written promise of his lordship not to prosecute, the case looked so evenly balanced that he could only regard the change in Ransford's manner as due to the happier change which had come to pass in his position.

"Now, my boy," exclaimed Ransford,



suddenly turning round with an air of genial frankness, "I am ready."

Cuffing rose from his seat on the edge of the bed, and Ransford flung his bag outside the door.

"Let us go into the other room," he said, as he closed the emptied drawers, "have a parting drink, and say good-bye to Piccadilly."

The lawyer advanced towards the door. For a moment his back was turned upon Ransford—only for a moment, but Ransford had been waiting for the opportunity. Flinging all the weight of his body into the blow he struck Cuffing under the right ear, and fell upon him as the lawyer staggered under the sudden assault. It was the work of an instant to pin him upon the floor stunned. Cuffing struggled but faintly. Ransford had found his American pocket. Taking out the revolver he threw it into the opposite room.

"Damn you," he gasped, "that's safe; we'll have no shooting, Mr. Clever," and dragged him back into the bedroom,

shutting the door carefully behind him.

"Don't kill me," gasped Cuffing, as Ransford bent over him.

"Oh, you can speak, you infernal thief," said Ransford, releasing his hold upon him.

"No, I am not going to kill you; but I'll do that for you if you are not quiet."

"You might as well," said Cuffing, his face livid, his lips wet with blood. "Fetch my pistol, and blow my brains out, and I will thank you."

"What are you mumbling?"

"I think I am dying," said Cuffing.

"No, you are not. Open your mouth."

Cuffing raised his hand as if to defend himself.

"It's no good; I'm going to gag you, that's all."

"For heaven's sake don't," gasped the lawyer. "I'll give up the affair—let you have your own way."

"Indeed," said Ransford. And the next minute Cuffing, securely gagged, was laid upon the bed, and bound to the bed-

stead. The lawyer watched his gaoler all the time with a strange fascinated gaze.

"You have called me brute, thief, liar; you have threatened to shoot me like a dog. Curse you, now do your worst!"

Cuffing saw his confederate leave the room; heard him lock the door outside; heard his footsteps on the stairs; and then all was still as death, the silence being more apparent from the steady patter of the rain.

Not even the drowsy hum of the great city, on this wet summer afternoon, seemed to reach the dreary attic in which Cuffing's hopes had come to such a cruel end. He was not so badly hurt as he wished Ransford to believe, though it would have been vain to struggle against so powerful an enemy.

Breathing heavily, he looked up at the ceiling, and endeavoured to gather his scattered faculties. He tried to move; he groaned, he sighed; he feared he might go mad. The rain went on with its dull music. He moved his right leg; the rope

responded with something like elasticity ; he struggled, and in a few minutes found more play in the cord. Then he made an effort to move his whole body. The torture was great—more mental, however, than physical. He moved his right arm, then his left, and then began to struggle. The ropes gave way a little, but the struggle left him exhausted and weak. If he could only free his right hand, he would be able to remove the gag which, as a lawyer, he might have been forgiven for regarding as especially galling.

Cuffing's bitterest enemy might have pitied him as he lay struggling there, utterly demoralized and almost powerless.

Three quarters of an hour of writhing and struggling—it seemed an age—freed the wretched victim from his bondage ; and within an hour after the attack he stood upright beneath the skylight free from ropes and gag, but he was greatly exhausted.

"It serves me right," he said, hoarsely—"serves me right ; I had my misgivings all day."

The rain still fell monotonously on the window, penetrating at last the various crevices, and sending a little shower of spray upon the upturned face.

“Thank God for that; if I could only get a drink!” said Cuffing. “I almost wish he had killed me, though; they would have hanged him then, the coward! Hanged him by the neck till he was dead—curse him. If I could only get down there! There is a chance yet. Hi, hi! murder! fire! murder!”

Cuffing discovered to his horror that he was too hoarse to make himself heard; his voice seemed altogether to fail him. Further, he could not walk steadily; his legs trembled under him; his hand shook. He sat down upon the bed, hoping to regain strength by waiting. Then he stamped upon the floor; but the only response was a dull echo. He beat the door with the same result. He lifted a chair upon the bed, and climbed upon it to open the skylight, but he found that it did not open. Ransford's remark about the window was

a cunning trick to lull suspicion. "To be the wretched dupe of such a thing as he, I wish I were dead! I, who counted myself a match for any man, to be worsted by a coward and an ass!" He got down, and sat upon the bed once more.

There was a flask of brandy in his bag, but both were in the other room. He feared he was going to faint. That brandy, he would have given worlds for a teaspoonful of it. The sound of a footstep on the stair revived him. He rushed to the door. No, it was not a footstep. Some one would surely come if he continued to hammer at the door. He took up the chair and beat it against the door until he was exhausted.

As he lay panting upon the floor an adjacent clock struck seven. Only seven! The reflection that there was still time to reach the rendezvous if he were only outside the room gave him new life. Once more he returned to the attack, flinging himself against the door with all his remaining strength.

A panel cracked and gave way. Cuffing uttered a hoarse cry of delight. Tears of joy started to his eyes.

"I shall still be there," he said, hurling himself once more at the door, and kicking at the broken panel with a last physical effort.

"I shall be in time; Fate is not going to let that coward have it all his own way. A little brandy will put me right," he gasped, as he continued to batter at the door.

At last there was a footstep on the stairs. Relief was surely coming at last. He listened breathlessly. It could not be Ransford returning. No; the coward was at Longreach by that time. The footsteps were surely coming nearer and nearer. Cuffing's heart beat wildly. There was not only a chance of escape, but of escape soon enough for him to reach the rendezvous in time to frustrate the villainous designs of his base confederate. The footsteps came hurriedly now up the last flight of stairs, quick and fast in response to Cuffing's cries.

The bells of an adjacent church chimed three quarters past seven, as the porter of the chambers unlocked the broken door and let the prisoner out. Cuffing did not stay to explain. He rushed forth upon the landing, down the stairs, and into the street, leaving the man who had come to his timely rescue not a little astonished and alarmed.

At the top of the Haymarket he scrambled into a hansom cab.

"Charing Cross Railway Station," he said, "drive for your life and an extra shilling."

"Right sir."

Away went the cab, rattling down the Haymarket, dashing into Pall Mall, Cuffing looking eagerly over the splash-board.

"Take the top end of Trafalgar Square," he screamed as they turned the corner in Pall Mall East, "it's death if I miss that train."

Crack, crack went the cabman's whip. The horse broke into a wild gallop; but



lightning speed would hardly have kept up with Cuffing's desire to reach Erith.

Before the cab could pull up at the station, Cuffing had leaped out and paid his fare.

"Train for Erith," he said, rushing upon a porter at the ticket office.

"Just in time—book here," said the official.

"Second to Erith," said Cuffing.

"Train on the left," said the porter, "quick!"

The next moment the guard blew his whistle; but Cuffing had caught the eight o'clock train for Erith.

## CHAPTER IX.

### NEMESIS AT THE CUTTLE FISH INN.



At all times the solitary house at Longreach, standing in the centre of a patch of green on a great greasy mudbank, looked strangely dismal and uninviting.

Even summer failed to lend a charm to the broken-down place with its bleary windows, its bulging doorstep, and its crazy sign creaking in the smallest breath of air.

The Cuttle Fish in the good old days—as the landlord called the days of prize-fighting and cockpits—was a celebrated house. It had no neighbours on land within three miles. There was Erith com-

paratively close by, it is true, but only by water; for if you were a stranger and thought you could walk to the spot along the shore you found yourself impeded by an inland river. There was Purfleet it is true, not far off—but the Thames separated that picturesque little town from Longreach; and the Cuttle Fish had other advantages for the members and patrons of the prize-ring. If a battle taking place under the immediate shadow of the creaking sign were disturbed by the police, the gallant and enterprising gentlemen had only to get into a boat, and cross the creek, and forthwith resume their operations in another county.

“Ah, them was rattling good times,” said the thin wiry landlord Bill Jeffs, on this wet dismal night of our veritable history, addressing Mr. Philip Ransford, who had just arrived.

“Yes, I suppose they were,” said Ransford; “what do you call the hour?”

“Well, by Greenwich I ’spect its about a quarter to eight; but, as I was a saying,

what's the good of all this ere legislation as they calls it for making folks virtuous ? it don't alter the real natur of things."

"No, I dare say," said Ransford, taking off his wet coat and shaking it before the fire. "You'll leave me in full possession of this place for two hours then ?"

"Certainly," said Bill, "for a week if you like ; I aint 'ad a customer for a ten days for that matter ; I'm goin' over to Purfleet, and don't expec to be back afore ten o'clock."

"And when are you going ?" said Ransford.

"When I've got that ere fiver as was talked about," said the man, wiping his mouth with the sleeve of his coat, and depositing a short black pipe, which he had been smoking, in his waistcoat pocket.

"Here it is then," said Ransford, placing a crisp note in the landlord's hands. "There will be no callers ?"

"Callers such a night as this, when the rain is coming down enough to drown the

reach itself! Should think not," said Bill, buttoning his coat.

"No, it is a capital night," said Ransford; "and the steamer comes down about nine?"

"Yes, and my lad will 'ave a boat waitin' for you down below, and will put you on board in a jiffey."

"Thank you," said Ransford. "Private room upstairs, you say?"

"Yes, and candles lighted, and a pen and ink and paper, as Master Cuffing told me. Ah, that's a lawyer if you like. Once when I was lagged for——"

"That will do. I've no time to hear your private history. Another day, when I call, we'll talk about it," said Ransford hurriedly. "You had better be off now."

"Right you are," said the landlord lounging out into the rain.

Phil walked on tiptoe up the rickety staircase to examine the room overhead.

It was a long rambling place, a room that covered the whole extent of the house below. Several smaller rooms had been

broken down to make it. There were windows back and front, with ragged green blinds, one of which was flapping a steady accompaniment to the rain that surged and hissed against the window panes. There were two or three chairs scattered about, and down the centre of the room were ranged tressels and boards covered with beer and tobacco stains of ancient date. At the farther end a small round table had been placed for the use of Mr. Cuffing and his friends, with a penny bottle of ink, a quill pen, and two sheets of note-paper. Over the mantel-shelf were hung the faded portraits of half a dozen fighting men, and in the fireplace the rain fell with heavy splashes.

Ransford shuddered as he walked round the room, with his shadow stalking before him tall and gaunt.

He sat down at the round table to wait and wonder how Cuffing was faring beneath the rivetted skylight in Piccadilly. Then his mind misgave him as to the wisdom of the course he had pursued, and he began

to speculate in what way Cuffing might try to revenge himself.

The sign screamed in the wind, and the windows shook, making the loneliness of the place impressive. Mr. Philip Ransford did not feel quite happy, in spite of his success. If Cuffing should get released in time to come down. The idea and the moaning of the wind made him shudder again. "Pooh!" he said, getting up and walking towards the door, "no chance of that. I shall be on board the steamer before anybody hears him, even if he gets the gag out of his infernal mouth." The window-blind at the end of the room flapped to and fro, the wind attacking it through a broken pane. Ransford began to feel nervous. He almost wished he had permitted the landlord to remain. The rain hissed, as the wind flung it in masses upon the windows.

He looked out into the night. It was black with rain and darkness. A nervous fear fell upon him. He thought some one crept into the room and stood behind him.

"Who's that?" he shrieked, and drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. There was no reply, except from the sign, which groaned, and the window-blind, that seemed like an ill-omened thing flapping big bat-like wings.

"It's devilish lonely," said Ransford, the very fact of speaking seeming at the moment courageous. Then he whistled for companionship, and as if in defiance of anything human or superhuman that might be lurking near.

Meanwhile Bill Jeffs had gained his boat, and was calmly sculling it over to Purfleet, and wondering what Cuffing's game might be, while Cuffing was flinging himself into the train, and having the door banged upon him by the guard. Mr. Philip Ransford, therefore, had Longreach to himself for the reception of Lord St. Barnard, and the conclusion, so far as he was concerned, of a very disagreeable business.

"This won't do, I must pull myself together," said Ransford, "to be nervous at this time is to be an ass, and the man



who can floor Cuffing and gag him to be afraid of the wind, ought to be kicked."

Scream, shriek, went the sign.

"Damn the sign," said Ransford with a shudder, "it startles one awfully."

Flop-flap from the blind. Hiss-hiss the rain. Hoo-hoo roared the wind.

"What a night!" said Ransford, looking at his watch. "Ten minutes past eight; five minutes more, and I shall have a companion; that's some consolation. It won't take long to settle the business, and then, Mr. Clever Cuffing, you may accomplish the rope trick, and visit your friend, Bill Jeffs, in his haunted house. I wish to heaven I were well out of it."

A footstep. The door of the house was opened and closed. Ransford's heart beat. He listened.

"Ah, here he is, punctual to the minute. What a sell for Cuffing, who thinks the appointment is at nine, and who, if he is rescued from the gag, can't get here before midnight."

There was some hesitation on the part

of the person who had entered the house.

"This way, my lord," said Ransford, going to the staircase.

The lock in the outer door was turned, and the stairs creaked under a heavy foot-step.

"Odd to lock the door," said Ransford ; "but he's right ; I'm glad nobody can possibly disturb us now. Damn that sign, it makes me quite nervous."

Kalmat, not Lord St. Barnard, entered the room. He closed the door behind him, and stood with his back to it. Ransford, who had gone to the staircase to meet him, fell back with a startled look.

"Who are you ?" he asked, the moment he had sufficiently recovered his surprise to speak. "And what do you want here ?"

"Don't you know me ?" said Kalmat, taking off his hat and pushing back his long hair.

The rain splashed on the windows ; the wind howled in the chimney.

"No, and don't want to know you," Ransford replied, with a sudden fear chilling his heart as he recognized the fierce look which he had twice encountered while he stood in the dock at Bow Street.

"You will have time enough, then, to make my acquaintance before Lord St. Barnard comes. His lordship told me that he should not be here until nine o'clock. It is now only a quarter past eight," said Kalmat.

"What do you want, then?" asked Ransford, with an assumed air of indifference. "I have no appointment with you."

"I have a long-standing appointment with you," said Kalmat, advancing into the room.

The sign screamed ; it sounded to Ransford like a derisive and fiendish laugh.

"Indeed," replied Ransford. "Did Lord St. Barnard send you here ? Is he going to shuffle out of his engagement ?"

"No ; he will keep it to the letter ; and he did not send me here."

In spite of his utmost efforts to keep himself steady and equal to the emergency, Philip Ransford trembled with a vague fear as the square-built, firm figure of the stranger advanced towards him.

"What is it, then?" he said, retreating before Kalmat. "What do you want?"

"What is Tom Mayfield likely to want with Philip Ransford?" said Kalmat, taking a brace of pistols from his pocket.

The blind flapped, and the sign became furious in its screams of laughter.

Ransford gasped out an impious exclamation and rushed to the nearest window.

"That will not help you; if you attempt to escape I will shoot you down as I would shoot a wolf, as you should be shot, and as I ought to shoot you," said Kalmat. "Don't put your hand anywhere near your pockets, or you are a dead man."

"I have no weapon about me," said Ransford, with a sickly expression of candour. "I never carry such things;" regretting, however, that he did not bring Cuffing's revolver away from Piccadilly.

He had thought of doing so, but in his hurry to get off, had overlooked it.

"Button your coat," said Kalmat.

Ransford complied with trembling hands. Ah! ah! whew! laughed the sign.

"I am going to give you a chance of life," said Kalmat. "I deserve death myself for such an act of charity; but no matter. Take this pistol."

"I will not," said Ransford. "I decline to have your blood upon my hands; I am sorry for what I have done, and will make all the amends in my power; but——"

"Amends!" said Kalmat, his eye fixed upon Ransford, and watching his every movement. "Amends for two shattered lives, amends for years of suffering, amends for ruined hopes, for broken hearts!"

"I will do anything," said Ransford.

"Do you remember those sunny days of Dunelm?" asked Kalmat.

The wind moaned hollow and low, and the sign was quiet, as if it listened and were sorry.

"Do you remember that good old man

who died in London while seeking for the child whom you had driven from home?"

"I do, I do," said Ransford, "and I tell you I am a scoundrel and will clear up the fame of the lady and——"

"Clear up her fame! that no man can do in the eyes of what you call Society in England. And what settlement can you make with me, with Tom Mayfield, who loved Mary Waller, and might perhaps have had more right to avenge her than he has now but for a hulking designing cur who thought his filthy money could buy anything? But we waste time. For one of us the last hour has come. You may shudder, you may raise your hands: I tell you the day of reckoning has arrived. In the first place give me your written confession. If you fall I can take it; if I fall I would like to have it in my hand."

"No, no," said Ransford, suddenly. "This is a trick to do me out of the money; you cannot mean to be such a coward as that."

"Spoken like yourself ; I have hope of you. Take the pistol."

"Tom Mayfield, do give me another chance ; I cannot fight with you. I will make restitution, on my knees ; I will sign anything, do anything ; but do not commit murder."

"Give me that paper," demanded Kalmat.

"I will not," said Ransford, standing erect.

"Good. Then you will fight for it. I give you three minutes."

He flung a pistol upon the table. Wind, rain, and sign applauded this act in roars and screams.

"Only in self-defence," said Ransford, taking it up. "I will not fight. Duelling is a thing of the past. We call it murder."

"More's the pity," said Kalmat ; "we will revive the old fashion."

"No, no ! Besides, the contest is unequal, and I am willing to wipe out the

wrongs I have done by confession and all that a man can do."

"Take your ground," said Kalmat, stepping back a few paces, his eye steadily fixed upon his adversary.

Ransford raised his pistol. Kalmat lifted his arm, and, resting his revolver upon it, with the quick action of a man who had lived the wild life of a Californian ranche, "If the first shot fails we repeat the experiment," he said. "Now, then, are you ready?"

"No, no!" screamed Ransford. "It is murder! It is assassination!"

"Ah! ah! hoo! hoo!" shouted the wind, going out to the river and tossing the boat that was waiting for Ransford.

Then suddenly raising his left hand and looking towards the door, Ransford cried, "Hark! Lord Barnard is coming!" The sign seemed to listen.

Kalmat, taken off his guard for a moment, turned his head also to listen. He had scarcely moved when Ransford seized the opportunity and fired. The bullet



whizzed past Kalmat's head. The poet redeemed his almost fatal indiscretion the next instant. With the swiftness of an Indian he returned the shot. A short, sharp cry, and a heavy fall announced the result. Wind and rain seemed to applaud together.

The adventurer of the Western wilds was familiar with death. He raised the prostrate head and looked into the fixed eyes of the pale face.

"Dead," he whispered, with a sigh of relief. "The air is purer that such carrion no longer breathes it."

Kalmat then unbuttoned the dead man's coat, and took from his pocket the document which Lord St. Barnard was then on his way to redeem. Putting his own pistol into his pocket, he noticed that Ransford still clasped the weapon which at one moment had nearly finished the drama so differently to what the justice of the situation demanded.

The rain beat in wild gusts against the windows ; the blind at the farther end of

the room flapped like the wings of some unearthly thing ; the wind howled dismally, adding to the gloom of the miserable picture ; there was a pale, guttering winding-sheet in one of the candles ; the blood was slowly oozing from Ransford's black, cruel heart, and making common cause with the beer stains and filth of the Cuttle Fish's best room.

Kalmat hurried downstairs, and at the door met Lord St. Barnard.

"It is all right," said Kalmat. "Come along ; you had better not go in. I have settled the business for you ; he gave up the document without the money."

"But," said his lordship, "is that right? Let him have the wretched price of his justice."


"No, no !" said Kalmat, taking my lord firmly by the arm. "The tide is fast running out, and the yacht's boat is already waiting for us. You must permit me to be the best judge. There, put that in your pocket."

Kalmat gave Lord St. Barnard the con-

fession, locked the Cuttle Fish door, flung the key away, and hurried Lord St. Barnard in the direction of the lights, that could just be seen through the rain and darkness, blinking over Purfleet.

## CHAPTER X.

### AN EPITAPH.

“O boat!” exclaimed Cuffing, in reply to a boatman who was standing out of the rain under an archway of the Erith Hotel.

“Certainly not,” said the man.

“I want to go to the public on Longreach.”

“Should think so,” said the man, shrugging his shoulders and thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets.

“I must have a boat,” said Cuffing; “pull me to the Cuttle Fish in twenty minutes and I’ll give you a sovereign.”

“It’s worth it,” said the man; “why there’s wind enough to blow us straight

out to sea, and rain enough to drown us."

"I don't want to discuss the weather; will you pull me to the Cuttle Fish or not?"

"Come this way," said the man, lounging out of the archway, "and we'll see what can be done. My eye, don't it rain? they of'n says it won't rain 'cos the wind's too 'igh, but its wind and rain to-night if you like."

"I don't like leaving you," said Cuffing; "are you coming?"

"Certainly I am," said the boatman.

He strode along the pier, beneath which the tide was running. The solitary lamps gleamed upon it, and the water could be seen curling and twisting and struggling with the wind and rain. The shadowy forms of vessels loomed out of the darkness.

"Mind you don't slip," said the man, descending the pier steps. "I think my pal's boat be down here. We must mind we don't get run down. I've no light."

"Hug the shore. I know the way," said Cuffing.

"So do I, for that matter," said the boatman. "There you are ; step in."

Cuffing was all agility. The boat was soon drifting with the tide.

"My mate and me 'ave not long since put a gentleman down at the Cuttle Fish. We thought as he'd come to arrange for a mill, but I dunno, I'm sure ; I don't think it could be done now."

"Ah ; what was he like ?" asked Cuffing anxiously.

"O', he wer a genleman, no mistake about that. An there was a time when the Cuttle Fish—why, lor' love you, the mills I've sin when I wer a boy——"

"Yes, no doubt," said Cuffing ; "pull away ; I think I see the light. No—yes it is."

"No it ain't," said the boatman. "That's the steam yacht *Fairy* ; she's going out a top o' the tide ; I know her lights. You won't see the Cuttle for five minutes yet

if you see it at all, for Bill Jeffs ain't much call for burning lights."

"Ah, very well; pull away, my friend; you only waste your breath by talking, and it must be getting on for ten o'clock; never was in such a slow train, and then there must be an infernal accident somewhere or another to delay us."

"Yes, sir, accidents are matters ov course now, as my mate says, when a man is——"

"Damn your mate," exclaimed Cuffing; "pull!"

"Well, you might be civil. I didn't want to bring you," said the boatman, laying to with a will.

"You were so well paid by the other passenger, eh?"

"No, not particular."

"Was there any other gentleman at the house!"

"Can't pull and talk," said the boatman provokingly.

"You're a disagreeable brute," said Cuffing.

"You're another," said the boatman ;  
"and I wish I'd left you at the pier, where  
I met you."

They had to shout at each other in the  
wind, and the conversation was very much  
like a quarrel from beginning to end ; for  
presently, when they were opposite the  
Cuttle Fish, they were pulled up with an  
angry salute.

"Hi ! Where the devil are you coming  
to?" shouted Bill Jeffs, into whose boat  
they had run bow foremost.

"Comin' to!" shouted Cuffing's boatman,  
"why, where should we be a comin' to  
but to Mr. Jeffs, proprietor of the Cuttle  
Fish Hotel?"

"O, it's you, Dick, is it?" said Bill,  
taking the bow of the other boat and pull-  
ing it ashore.

"Yes, with a customer ; and a damn  
rum customer too for that matter."

"There's your money," screamed Cuffing  
hoarsely, giving the fellow a sovereign.  
"You needn't land, and you needn't wait-  
You have a boat, Jeffs?"



"Yes, sir. Lor, Mr. Cuffing, why I'm glad to see you ; but you're late," said Bill. "Now then, Dick, do as the gentleman bids you ; away you go."

"All right, Mr. Jeffs," yelled the boatman, pushing off ; "I don't want to stay, don't think it."

"Yes, Jeffs, I'm late ; have the gentlemen come ?"

"'Spose so ; I see one of them leastwise, and my lad's been a waiting this hour for 'em, and he's a waiting now, and it's as much as he can do to keep the boat in hand."

"Indeed," said Cuffing, "well done ; come along ; I shall be in time. I knew I should, I felt it—had a presentiment."

Cuffing commenced to run through the mud.

"You'll soon tire of that, sir," said Jeffs, sinking into the mire at every footstep.

"There is a light," said Cuffing ; "they are there ! What about the steamer ?"

"Due quarter of an hour ago ; expect her here every minute."

"Go back, Jeffs, and hail her."

"Ain't necessary—my lad's there ; I told the gentleman, your friend, that I'd be back by this time."

"All right, you can retire if necessary," said Cuffing.

By this time they were at the door. They were received with welcoming screams from the sign.

"It's locked," said Bill Jeffs.

"Knock then," said Cuffing, beating at it with his fists.

A dull echo and the roaring of the wind was the only answer.

"Hi ! there, open the door," shouted Jeffs, looking up at the window.

No reply. The wind came driving right over the plain, shaking the Cuttle Fish sign, which creaked and groaned aloud.

"Damn that sign," said Jeffs ; "you never can hear yourself speak if there's a capful o' wind."

Cuffing hammered and kicked at the door.

"Can't you get in at the window ?"

"It's the only thing that fastens well, the

window," said Jeffs, putting his shoulder to the door which trembled at the thrust he gave it.

"Shout out once more, and then let us break in," said Cuffing.

"Hi! It's Bill Jeffs and Lawyer Cuffing," cried Bill, at the same time flinging a handful of mud at the window.

The sign creaked and groaned, as much as to say, "It is no good, you had better burst the door open;" and the rain beat into the faces of the two men, while the wind rattled the windows, and went off down to the river, in hoarse fits of laughter, knowing of the secret which the Cuttle Fish sign was prating about to the rain that hissed and pattered at the window, as if it were trying to awaken the hope and pride of the Ransford family.

"It's odd," said Jeffs, taking a run at the door, and forcing the lock with a crash that shook the whole place, and set the sign fairly shrieking.

Cuffing followed Jeffs into the kitchen. No one there. Upstairs. No one there.

“Yes, by God, there is!” exclaimed Jeffs, holding aloft the guttered candle.  
“And he’s dead!”

The light flickered for a moment upon the glazed, staring eyes ; the blind flapped its wings ; the rain hissed at the windows ; the wind moaned down the chimney ; the sign shrieked again a wild, defiant shriek ; the Ostend steamer whistled its signal in the river ; Jeff’s boy was still waiting for Ransford.

“Curse him !” said Mr. Simon Cuffing.  
“And that’s all I would say if I had to write his epitaph.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### DAYBREAK.



AFTER storm, calm. The sun was rising over Boulogne—the golden summer sun.

Flashing upon the sea in many a glittering beam, the harbinger of day was lighting up the windows of the distant city with its tall cathedral, its monumental folly, and its ranges of picturesque hills ; Chatillon on one hand with its far-off lighthouse ; on the other the ruined fort La Crèche catching the eye and helping to give artistic interest to the picture.

With what varied feelings have voyagers to this *ville de plaisance*, once the battlefield of so many political and historic hopes,

looked upon the well-known harbour! From the great Cæsar himself, who organized his invading army on the shore there for the subjugation of Britain, to that modern Cæsar who hoped to make a similar repetition of history, what a strange story of intrigue, rapine, battle, murder, and sudden death!

The same sun still rises and the sea rolls in colour of molten gold as when the first martyrs to Christianity laid down their lives in Morinia.

Five hundred odd years ago there was a wedding pageant at Boulogne equal in grandeur to our modern celebrations. Edward II. of England married Isabella of France here, and eight kings and queens and a score of princes were present at the ceremony.

It is a tempting subject, this glancing back at the history of the fine old town. That Kalmat was sitting in his dreamy fashion, with a history on his knee, picturing the grand historical panorama in his mind, is, however, the only excuse to be

offered even for this brief halt by the way.

The *Fairy* was gliding pleasantly over the calm waters. Lord St. Barnard and Kalmat were sitting on deck. The poet smoked and talked to his friend, whose eyes were fixed on the harbour.

"How earnest we all are," said the poet, "in our affairs. How paramount they seem to be, how momentous; and yet what a short story it is, the history of our little lives."

Lord St. Barnard looked inquiringly at his friend.

"To place our story beside the events that have occurred in yonder historic place would seem affectation, and yet how full of romance it is, what emotion there is in it, what tremendous issues so far as we are concerned. From the subjugation of Britain to the present time Boulogne has a marvellous history—tragic, splendid, with social glimpses of modern romance that might furnish the novelist with a thousand plots; but for you and I, Bou-

logne has only that personal interest which belongs to a persecuted woman. Her mother lies buried yonder. What a sad story, her death from smallpox, and the old man's discovery of the child, his devotion to the infant, his love for the girl, and his fruitless search and lonely end in your great cruel London !"

" Indeed, you say truly, my friend ; some things in this world are terribly out of joint. My poor wife ! may a kind Heaven spare her for some years of real happiness, yet."

" Amen," said Kalmat.

" Forgive me," said his lordship, " if I am not inclined to talk ; my heart is too full when I look yonder and think of her distress, and feel that I doubted her. Ay, I did, sir ; I doubted her. We might have been separated for ever but for you."

Lord St. Barnard walked to the bow of the vessel and leaned over the taffrail, watching the city that was coming nearer and nearer. Kalmat followed him with his eyes.



“ And I am not jealous of him,” said the poet to himself. “ But—

“ ‘ Alas for a heart that is left forlorn !

If you live you must love ; if you love, regret—

It were better, perhaps, we had never been born,

Or better at least we could well forget.’

“ Ah, my wayward singer,” he said, as he repeated the favourite lines, “ thou hast learnt thy sorrowful story well. It is a wailing, melancholy muse, the dame thou delightest in, melancholy as mine own ; but thou hadst no taste of vengeance. From this time forth I shall leave thee, my brother, to tune the dirge of blighted love and broken hearts alone. My song shall be the song of hate, the sweet sadness of the heart, if yon other mighty singer may brook that supplement of sweet. Vengeance, rough justice, natural reprisal, life for life—I honour the Indian passion. How I hated that traitorous cur ! What happiness is mixed up with his death ! The Indian’s joy of an enemy’s scalp is no longer a mystery to me. The child of nature hath true instincts. Murder, say

you, O civilized thing of neutral life and neutral passion—murder! it is justice! Murder, to wipe out the thing accursed, to slay the adder, to crush the fair semblance of an angel that nurses a venomous tooth, the fiend in disguise, the devil in a fair form, Vice with a mock smile of Virtue! It is the dream of sages, that coming time when the cruel and deformed, the narrow, the dissolute, the cur, the sweating fawning time-server shall be extinct; and when, should the evil weed be found upon the earth, it shall be a common instinct to pluck it up or cut it down, to lay it low like yonder noxious thing we have left on its back, for hollow London to reflect upon, and talk about, and write about in its narrow ways and monkey clubs.”

“You seem sad, too,” said Lord St. Barnard, laying his hand upon his friend’s shoulder; “a poet, and not rejoicing over this lovely picture!”

“I am not sad, believe me,” said Kalmat.

"In twenty minutes the captain says we shall be steaming between the jetties."

"And the world will be bright again for you?"

"I hope so," said Lord St. Barnard. "My dear friend, you have brought the morning."

"It is a cloudy one," said Kalmat; "you must not expect the full summer yet."

"My wife restored to health is all I ask for now," said his lordship. "How shall we find her, think you?"

"Better, progressing well," said Kalmat. "I feel to-day as light-hearted as I used to feel when I was a boy. A cloud has gone from my brain, a blot from my best thoughts. I breathe freely; the world is larger than it was. I am almost a happy man."

"You deserve to be happy," said his lordship; "I wish we could define happiness."

"Complete happiness is to have the love of a true woman, and to be indifferent to the opinion of the world," said Kalmat.

“And to live in the shadow of the Indian’s Olympus?”

“Yes,” said Kalmat, “where thought is as free as the winds, and you make your own heaven in your own way.”

“Could one buy an estate there and cultivate it, and build a place like dear old Grassnook, and live one’s own life, without molestation?”

“Ay, truly,” said Kalmat; “a life that princes might envy; nay, more, a life that poets might pray for, the life that is nearest perfection this side of Paradise.”

“We must talk to my wife concerning these things. And what about the children? How could we educate them?”

“Easily,” responded Kalmat; “be your own tutor, and let Nature have a voice in the curriculum.”

“Ah! you are a poet.”

“I had been a madman else.”

“We are all a little mad, they say.”

“If to be tied down to common ways be sanity,” said Kalmat, “let you and I, my friend, be a little mad.”

"The poet, the dreamer, has a world of his own when this is dark and weary."

"He alone," said Kalmat, "understands the true secrets of life, the requirements of the heart, the blessings of Nature."

"But in ignoring the realities of life he is apt to make special miseries for himself."

"You wish to argue yourself out of the whisperings of that still small voice that tells you some years of absence is necessary to your own peace of mind and the comfort of your wife."

"It may be so. Do you not think it would be coward-like to fly?"

"You have resigned your position in her Majesty's household, you have for the time being committed social death, you have satisfied the envious and malicious; think you they will tolerate even a just resurrection, so soon after the burial?"

"You reason well; and for that matter my heart is sick of the empty round of so-called social duties. We were never happier, Mary and I, than when we were at Grass-

nook when we had a day or two alone, enjoying our own society, boating, driving, visiting the children at their studies, or looking through old music books and hunting up old tunes and ancient ballads. With her I could live the life of a scholar, a student ; but we should lack sympathizing friends, she would be lonely I fear."

"There is no loneliness with Nature, and you and she have seen the vaunted life of cities. Yonder among the oaks and the pines, looking down upon the Sacramento Valley, God, not the Devil, is master of the fashions. No club gossip, no drawing-room cynic, no envious woman breathes the pure air of the mountain and the plain. Jealousy shall not touch you, pride of birth shall not interfere with your happiness. Lonely, when you have your memories! Lonely with books; lonely with mighty rivers, with mountains where summer reigns at the foot, and winter, grave and majestic, crowns the summit! Lonely where the corn waves in golden splendour, and the vine needs no cultiva-

tion, and the dreamy music of waters that have come through forests primæval wanders up to your home on the mountain side through the alder and madroño trees."

"Your description is the description of the poet," said Lord St. Barnard; "but it falls like a solace upon the mind."

"It is perfected in one soft tender sibilant word, 'Peace.' You will be outside the wretched din and turmoil of the conflict, further away from it than the parson in 'The Valley of Poppies;' for you will hear no sound of its warfare, and neither the defeated nor the victorious can drop in to disturb the even current of your lives."

"You make me long to see your paradise on earth."

"You must see it. From Boulogne the land of the Indian's Olympus is your proper destination. Let me be your guide; let me lead you like a shepherd to the quiet valleys, the peaceful shade, the haven of rest."

The vessel bounded on. The sea was so calm and blue that you could see shoals

of mullet sporting in the sunshine at the very surface of the water. The vessel bounded on ; and the two men talked of peace.

Behind the yacht a passenger steamer came panting under a heavy freight. Ahead of them the pier was filling with the usual crowd of spectators and Boulognese. The customary uniform, and the short-frocked fish-women were there ; and they raised a cry of admiration as the *Fairy* glided in between the jetties, and was moored at the packet-station.

"You will land at once," said Kalmat, "and go straight to the hotel ; all good fortune go with you. I will join you by-and-by."

"Nay, will you not come with me ?" said Lord St. Barnard, hesitating.

"No ; I have the luggage to see to, and the captain to chat with, and a great deal of business to manage."

"*Au revoir* then," said his lordship, stepping ashore and making his way with a beating heart to the hotel.



The passenger steamer came puffing and snorting into port, and Kalmat, having tipped the captain and crew of the *Fairy*, lighted his pipe and sat down upon a bale of goods to watch the voyagers land.

## CHAPTER XII.

### AN INQUEST.



HERE had been more than one inquest at the "Cuttle Fish." When Dick Swivel killed Tom Bigg in a battle that lasted an hour and twenty minutes, there was great excitement at Bill Jeffs' house; but there was a mystery about the death of Philip Ransford which gave a touch of romance to the incident that was wanting in connection with the black and bruised corpse of Tom Bigg.

The Coroner held his court on the day following the discovery of Ransford's body. The sun shone gloriously. The Thames ran smoothly under the foliage of the oppo-

site bank. It was as if Nature repudiated the storm of the previous night. Nothing of the kind, it seemed to say. A storm! You must have been dreaming. A creaking sign, windows rattling, a wind that rushed madly over the reach and tossed the shipping! Quite a mistake. Peace never reigned more supreme. The steamers labouring under a stress of weather! Why, they made their harbours amidst soft gales and in calm seas. Not a breath of air disturbed land or water. On Erith pier men lolled in the sun. The vessels, moored almost mid-stream, lay quiet and still. A dozen visitors were sitting beneath the shade of the trees in the adjacent gardens, and on Longreach a little crowd hung about the entrance to Bill Jeffs' hotel.

In the ill-furnished bar a dozen men were packed together near a square kitchen-table, at which the Coroner, Mr. Cuffing, and a police superintendent were sitting.

The local constable having opened the court in due form, the jury followed the Coroner out of the room and up the creak-

ing staircase. The crowd at the door watched them curiously at the entrance of the house. The jury were going to view the body, which met them face to face in a small bedroom at the top of the stairs. It lay on its back upon a table, and allowed them to look at it and touch it—this white, silent thing that we knew alive at Dunelm, a fine, stalwart young fellow, flushed with strength and pride. It was quite abject and humble, and could not help itself; this lump of mortality which used to lash the north country rivers for salmon, and make love to that beautiful belle of the cathedral city. The Coroner turned it over, and talked learnedly about bullet wounds, until one of the jurymen, who had not been accustomed to that branch of science, felt very ill, and set the example of leaving the room.

When they had returned to their former places in the bar-parlour, where the Coroner held his court, that important officer of the Crown said he understood Mr. Cuffing was the principal witness in this inquiry, and

he must, therefore, request that gentleman to leave the room.

Mr. Cuffing : Sir, I appear here as the solicitor of the deceased gentleman, and in that capacity conceive myself entitled to remain. I say this, of course, with all respect and with due submission to your authority.

The Coroner : This court knows no other authority than its own. Even a solicitor may not remain to watch an inquiry in any case without the authority of the Coroner.

Mr. Cuffing : I quite understand, Mr. Coroner, the ancient dignity and power of your office, but I submit that——

The Coroner : Allow me a moment, sir ; are you not a witness in this inquiry ?

Mr. Cuffing : I am quite ready to give evidence if called upon.

The Coroner : You certainly will be called upon, and in that case I think you must agree with me that the interests of all parties will be best secured by your acting rather in the capacity of witness than

lawyer, and I will ask you to be good enough to leave the room until you have the opportunity of saying what you know about this melancholy business.

Mr. Cuffing : I bow to your decision, Mr. Coroner.

The lawyer left the room and walked to the door, where he was regarded with curiosity by the crowd of idlers who lolled there in the sun, and drunk the muddy ale of the "Cuttle Fish." Mr. Cuffing had quite settled his course of action ; he would still play his game for Lord St. Barnard's money. It was clear to him that his lordship had shot Ransford, and he was grateful for the service. The noble lord's character had gone up immensely in Cuffing's estimation, since yesterday. He would help his lordship in this inquiry ; he would prove himself worthy of the confidence which the prosecutor in the Bow Street case had shown in treating with him. His evidence should clear the murderer, and make him his friend for ever. There would be no difficulty in finding his lord-

ship. Already detectives had started in pursuit of the gentleman, who was rowed from the pier to the "Cuttle Fish" on the previous evening ; and there was a boatman who had driven a person who seemed like a gentleman within a mile of the "Fish" at about half-past eight. There was nothing in that. It was quite clear that Lord St. Barnard had kept his appointment, and whether in a quarrel, or otherwise, Cuffing could not understand ; but he had shot Ransford, that was certain. In Spain he might have hired some one to do it for him at a price, but this kind of business could hardly be negotiated in England, though character murderers were common enough, and could be bought cheaply. No, his lordship had fallen from his high estate ; the atmosphere of Bow Street had demoralized him ; he had been unable to control himself, and the lonely dirty night had conspired to make him an assassin. It was a cunning device to put a pistol into Ransford's hand. No doubt his lordship would say they had fought a duel. Well,

that might be ; for after Ransford's sudden exhibition of courage at Piccadilly, he was quite prepared to find that, under pressure, he might have found pluck enough to handle a pistol ; but the document was gone, and no money left behind. If he had not been on the spot himself he would have felt certain that Jeffs had appropriated the money : for Lord St. Barnard was not the man to consider it. There were peculiarities in the case which puzzled Cuffing ; but he summed up the matter with entire satisfaction to himself, and determined to make a bold stroke for Lord St. Barnard's favour.

The first witness examined was William Jefferson, or Bill Jeffs, as he was called at Longreach. He produced the letter of Simon Cuffing making arrangements for the rooms at the "Cuttle Fish," and related all the circumstances of the arrival of the deceased.

The Coroner : He expected some other persons ?

Witness : He said so—a gentleman.



The Coroner : Did he give his name ?

Witness : Not a word.

The Coroner : Whom did you suppose he was going to meet ?

Witness : Can't say. Might ha' bin Mister Cuffing, the lawyer ; might not.

The Coroner : Exactly, but he gave you no clue at all ?

Witness : Only gave me a fi' pun note, accordin' to agreement.

The Coroner : Did it not occur to you that it was altogether a strange proceeding to hire your house and pay a large sum for two hours of occupation in your absence ?

Witness : No ; can't say as it did. If I hadn't a goodish customer once in a way I should starve ; and I ain't nothing to brag about now.

The Coroner : You are not, Jeffs, you are not.

Witness : True for you, sir.

The Coroner : Now, what time was it when you saw Mr. Cuffing last night ?

Witness : Should think about auf-past nine ; can't azackly say.

The Coroner : And he was just arriving in a boat ?

Witness : He were ; Jack Stack were a pulling of him, and ran into my boat.

The Coroner : Yes ; and first you said that Cuffing asked you if they had gone, intimating that there were two persons in the house ?

Witness : He didn't intimidate nothing, as I remember.

The Coroner : You know what I mean, Mr. Jeffs ; now, please to tax your memory.

Witness : I'd rather leave that to the Gov'ment, they seem so clever at taxin.'

The jury laughed at this. The foreman even went so far as to slap his thigh and say, " Good." He was notorious for the litigation into which his anti-income-tax enthusiasm had led him.

The Coroner : No pleasantry, Mr. Jeffs ; this is a serious question.

Witness : Thank you, sir.

The Coroner frowned at the jury, and

made a point of pausing significantly until the foreman had recovered from the effects of the witness's mild joke.

The Coroner : When you first spoke to the constable you said that Cuffing asked, "Have the gentlemen come?"

Witness : Well, it was very windy, as you know, and I don't azackly know whether he said him or them, but I think it were them. I would swear it was, for that matter.

The Coroner : Very well ; and you found the body as already described ?

Witness : A-lyin' with the pistol in his hand, just as Mr. Cuffing told the policeman ; no doubt 'avin' shot hisself right through the 'ed.

The Coroner : That will do.

Witness : Much obliged, to you, sir. About my expenses ?

The Coroner : Leave the court, Mr. Jeffs.

Mr. Jeffs thereupon made a low bow to the jury, winking at the foreman (who was still tickled at the idea of the Government

taxing a man's memory, which was quite as ridiculous and unfair, he thought, as laying an embargo on his income), and backing out into the passage, where he encountered Cuffing, who looked at him with apparent indifference, and went upstairs into the room where the body of Ransford was lying, stiff and cold, upon the table. Presently Jeffs joined Cuffing.

"Only a second, Jeffs ; you stuck to the one gentleman ?" said Cuffing, hurriedly.

"Like wax," said Jeffs. "'Them!' I says, 'No. He asked if *the* gentleman had gone, and no more,' I says, 'said nothing about *them*.'"

"Right. Go down, my boy."

Jeffs (whose version of his evidence did not quite agree with the Coroner's notes) went down, and by-and-by Cuffing was once more among the crowd at the door.

During this incident the Coroner explained to the jury, that in the ordinary course of things, this would be the place to call the witness Cuffing, but there were peculiarities in the case which would induce

him to take Mr. Cuffing last, and he would now call the policeman.

The officer stated that he was sent for at half-past ten last night, to the "Cuttle Fish," where he saw the deceased lying on his left side, quite dead, with a wound in the forehead. There was a revolver in his right hand, one chamber of which had been discharged. Jeffs, the landlord of the house, and a solicitor named Cuffing were there. He saw Jeffs first and took down what he said, and had no doubt that Jeffs said Mr. Cuffing asked if the gentlemen had gone ; he did not say gentleman.

The surgeon who had examined the body, gave a highly-scientific and technical account of its condition.

The Coroner : Now, Doctor, after your excellent description of the wound, which you say was sufficient to cause death, let me ask if in your opinion the situation and character of the wound are compatible with the theory that this man was his own murderer.

The Surgeon : Compatible with suicide ?

---

The Coroner : Yes.

The Surgeon : Yes ; but equally compatible with the report in one of the morning papers ?

The Coroner : Kindly dismiss the morning papers from your mind for a moment.

The Surgeon : The wound in the deceased's forehead, penetrating to the brain, might have been inflicted by himself, or might have been inflicted by some other person.

The Coroner : Would he have fallen on his left side ?

The Surgeon : Most likely upon his face ; but I did not see the body as it was first discovered, the police had searched it.

The Coroner : Jeffs says it was on its left side.

The Surgeon : Possibly.

The Coroner : There is nothing unreasonable in that, whether the man was killed in a duel, or by a more vulgar mode of assassination, or by his own hand ?

The Surgeon : Nothing.

The Inspector of Police said he had

several witnesses to call, subject to the Coroner's approval, but he would suggest that if Mr. Cuffing was to be examined, this would be the most convenient time.

The Coroner : By all means if you think so.

Police Inspector : I think you should caution him, Mr. Coroner, that he need not give evidence at present unless he chooses ; and that anything he says may be used should any charge be preferred against him—(sensation)—in connection with the death of Mr. Philip Ransford.

The Coroner : Certainly. Call Simon Cuffing.

The lawyer appeared at once, and was duly cautioned.

The Coroner : It is only right that you should quite understand your position, Mr. Cuffing. I do not say for a moment that any charge is going to be made against you, implicating you in the death of this man, with whose name your own has been lately associated in such a painful manner at Bow Street ; but the police, acting, I believe, on

a telegram from Scotland Yard, wish me to caution you, and I do so accordingly.

Mr. Cuffing : I am sure I fully appreciate the honour which the police have done me. I should have imagined that Mr. White might have been better employed ; but no matter, I am here in the interests of truth and justice ; my conduct is before the world and I defy the police to find a blur upon it ; and at the same time, in reference to their caution and to yours, sir, I advise them to be careful how they use the name of Simon Cuffing.

The jury put their heads together and murmured their approval of Cuffing's reply. Three of them were publicans, and they had no reason either to like or to respect the police.

The Coroner : Very good. Now we will proceed.

Mr. Cuffing : With all submission, Mr. Coroner, I must request that you take down my story as I tell it ; we shall save time in the adoption of this course, and as I have been cautioned, it will be better



that if I commit myself, I should do it voluntarily and in my own way, and not in response to questions put by the Court.

The Coroner : Very good, sir ; the jury is all attention.

Mr. Cuffing : The case of Lord St. Barnard against Philip Ransford, the deceased, is well known to all of you through the reports in the newspapers. I was his solicitor. In conducting the prisoner's defence, I did not exceed my instructions ; indeed, my cross-examination was founded upon statements much more damaging than the points I endeavoured to bring out.

The Inspector of Police whispered to the Coroner, who said he thought Mr. Cuffing was wandering from the business in hand.

Mr. Cuffing : Not at all.

The Foreman : Mr. Coroner, we would like to hear all that the witness has to say ; being a lawyer we think he might be left to judge for himself what is right and wrong as to the manner in which he conducts

himself before us, especially seeing that he has been cautioned.

The Coroner : Very well, gentlemen, I have no objection.

Mr. Cuffing : I will not dwell upon the details of the *Barnard v. Ransford* case, which stands adjourned, as you are aware, until Monday next. I hope Lord St. Barnard will be present to do an act of justice to my client, as well as to the lady who has been so shamefully maligned (sensation). After the release of my client from prison, he became more depressed than he was during his incarceration, and from expressing a wish that he had never moved in the business, he began to show such signs of remorse as induced me to question him more closely and severely than I had ever done before. The result was, that in a moment of weakness and repentance, he confessed to me that the whole of his charges against Lady St. Barnard were untrue.

The jury held their breath. For a moment you could hear a pin drop. The

Coroner looked at the Police Inspector, who laid down his pen and leaned back in his chair, covered with astonishment.

Mr. Cuffing: I can quite understand your surprise, and, I hope, your gratification, at this announcement. Before now clients have made confessions to their advocates, which have remained closed secrets for all time. Mr. Coroner and gentlemen of the jury, the moment Ransford burst into tears and fell sobbing upon my desk, letting out the pent-up feelings of many days, I said, "You must make atonement. You must confess in open court." "What," he said, "and be sent back to prison?" was his reply. "No," I said; "for that would be unprofessional, an advocate must not injure his client!" I commended him for trusting me, and promised that he should not suffer for it; but I insisted upon our doing justice to the injured lady and her husband (applause). With the consent of my client, I waited upon Lord St. Barnard, and with some difficulty, induced his lordship to listen to me. I succeeded

in obtaining his lordship's consent to meet my client, and to do it quickly, as he had shown unmistakable signs of a nervousness, which I feared might lead to aberration of mind. He talked of killing himself; said he was unfit to live; and otherwise conducted himself in quite an alarming manner. Lord St. Barnard came to my office, and upon his word of honour, and in the terms of this document which I now produce (sensation), agreed not to continue the prosecution, if my client made a clean breast of the whole matter. I did not let Lord St. Barnard know the full nature of the statement my client was prepared to make, because of course I had his interests to protect as far as possible; but I put the business in such a light that there was, finally, a mutual exchange of documents, and my client was to be allowed to go abroad free and unfettered, and on the publication of the confession, at the adjournment on Monday next, Lord St. Barnard was to place in my hands £10,000, for investment during Ransford's lifetime, in trust,

the interest to be paid as long as Ransford remained abroad, and to be forfeited together with a re-commencement of the prosecution if ever he returned to England. This part of the understanding was a verbal agreement ; but what I now tell you is ratified by the document which I lay before you, and by the copy of Philip Ransford's confession, which I can produce if necessary ; but I propose to reserve that for my statement at Bow Street on Monday next. (" Quite right," said the foreman.) Now, Mr. Coroner, we come to the sad incident of yesterday. It had been arranged that as soon as possible after the delivering of the confession to Lord St. Barnard, my client should go abroad. The document was handed to his lordship yesterday, prior to his lordship going to the Continent to join Lady St. Barnard ; and knowing Mr. Jeffs, who had once been a client of mine in a prize-fighting case, which some of you gentlemen may remember, I thought the best course would be to meet here and take the steamer in the river. I notified

this to his lordship and he approved of it, and his lordship said, curiously enough, he was going out from Erith in a friend's yacht that very night, as soon as the tide served.

[Jeffs had obtained information leading to Cuffing's conclusion that the "Fairy," which had got up steam off Purfleet, was the vessel in which his lordship had left the river; indeed there was a witness whom, at Cuffing's suggestion, Jeffs had sent down to Gravesend on business, who would have put this pretty well on record if he had been called.]

I wrote to the steamship company, and yesterday afternoon had arranged to go down to the "Cuttle Fish" and see my friend off. . He had been drinking, and I fancy was bordering on an attack of delirium tremens. At the last moment when he had packed his bag, he said I should not go with him; he would go alone; he cursed me and grew furious, and all of a sudden fell upon me, and tried to strangle me (sensation); he took a revolver from my

pocket—I have always carried a revolver since I lived in America—flung it into the opposite room, pulled another from his own pocket, threatened to shoot me, and ended by forcing a gag into my mouth and tying me to his bedstead. He then left me. I could not move for a long time ; but finally got free, and hurried to the train, following him to Erith. I engaged a boat, and on landing encountered Jeffs. I asked him if the gentleman had arrived, and he said, Yes, a long time ago. I said, I was later than I expected, and hurried to the house. I dare say I was a little excited ; for apart from the treatment I had received I feared that something serious might happen, I did not know what, but I was really not surprised to find my client dead. He was the sort of person to commit suicide, and he had threatened to do so, more than once ; he suffered from remorse to such an extent that he taunted me for being his solicitor, and said I ought not to have believed him. Yesterday in his mad passion he associated me with the cause of his anguish, and as-

saulted me as I have stated. And this gentlemen is all I have to say, unless you have any questions to ask.

The Coroner : At present I think it will be best to take Mr. Cuffing's statement as it stands. It will be necessary to adjourn this inquiry.

The Inspector of Police, said, it was only just to inform the court, that the condition of the deceased's rooms, at Piccadilly, quite bore out Mr. Cuffing's description of the struggle which had taken place there ; but the officer said nothing about the condition of Cuffing's chambers, though the lawyer was quite prepared with a plausible explanation upon that point if the subject had been mooted.

The Coroner : Have the deceased's relatives been communicated with ?

The Inspector of Police said they had written to the police of Dunelm, who would inform them of what had occurred, though the body was sufficiently identified.

The Coroner : Gentlemen, I do not propose to hear further evidence to-day ; we



will adjourn until to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

Cuffing went to London. He had a widowed sister living in one of the numerous courts which have their exits and entrances upon Bow Street. For years he had neither seen nor heard of her ; but he went straight to her house, with his bag, from Charing Cross Station. She was very poor, and his offer to take her first floor, at a weekly rent of twenty-five shillings, together with many expressions of affectionate regard, made his visit perfectly satisfactory. If she should be asked when he took the rooms, she must forget the exact date ; he had a reason for this, and the widow saw no difficulty in complying. Cuffing thereupon went to two newspaper offices and succeeded in getting an advertisement in the next morning's publications, announcing that he had removed his offices to the court in question. During the night he pasted a similar notice on the door, in Cassel Street, and the next day the policeman, who had examined the premises

---

could not satisfy his chief whether the notice was there on the previous day or not. Cuffing having played these last cards set about making himself comfortable in his new quarters, and sat down to wait the result.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### DREAMS AND REALITIES.



IN the meantime Lady St. Barnard was happy in a delicious unconsciousness. She was rambling through the fields at Dunelm, she was walking down the Bailey with admiring eyes upon her ; she was in church waiting for her grandfather to finish his closing voluntary, while the summer sunbeams wandered into the chancel. It was a hot summer Sunday, with her, long ago. The bells were chiming. The sun slumbered on the river. The water was a mirror for the trees and the tall cathedral towers. There was no sound beyond the drowsy hum of the bells, as their music

fell through the trees. The laburnums were yellow with blossoms, and the scent of the lilac filled the hot pulsations of the air.

Lord St. Barnard sat beside her, but she knew him not ; she only muttered in her delirium. If he could have understood that there was anything akin to happiness in her dreaming, he would have felt consoled for her want of recognition. If Kalmat had known that she saw him in the wandering of her mind back to that summer Sunday in the Cathedral city, he also would have felt that there was a tinge of light in the gloom of the situation. The doctor said there was no cause for serious alarm. His patient was strong, and she had inherited a fine constitution. He hoped to see her fit to travel in a few weeks. The fever was abating somewhat. It must run its course.

While the patient in her delirium was still wandering through the Dunelm meadows, Lord St. Barnard and Kalmat had a conversation about her. It was on the second

day after their arrival at Boulogne, and the first time that Lord St. Barnard had left her for more than a quarter of an hour at a time. They were sitting in the hotel yard. It was Saturday morning; the Friday after the Sunday when Lady St. Barnard disappeared. What a world of events had happened in those few days!

"She was wonderfully beautiful as a girl," said Kalmat; "you will not be jealous of my admiration?"

"Jealous," said his lordship, smiling.

"I call her to mind one summer Sunday long ago. She wore a light silk dress with lilac flowers in the pattern of it, slightly open at the neck, showing to perfection the graceful pose of her head. Do you know the bust of Clytie? the original I think is in the British Museum."

"I know it well."

"She was like that bust, her head was just as gracefully set upon her shoulders. I used to call her Clytie. Not to herself, nor to any one except to myself. I had an

exquisite bust of Clytie in my room. I used to talk to it."

"You have the true poetic temperament," said his lordship.

"If talking to inanimate things is evidence of the poetic temperament, I have it strongly; for I have conversed by the hour with trees and rivers. There are a cluster of oaks and pines, overlooking the Sacramento valley, which are in full possession of some of my most secret thoughts. There was an Indian girl in that distant village. I used to think her like Mary Waller. She had a similar soft expression of the eye. The chief, her father, was killed, and I obtained permission to have her educated. I sent her to Boston, three years ago, and have had remarkable accounts of her progress. My first idea was when she came of age, if her heart were not engaged in the meantime, to offer her my hand, and after a tour through Europe, to settle down in the Golden West. Poor Shaseta, I suppose she will regard me more as a father than a lover."

“ You have wandered a long way from Dunelm.”

“ I fear I am becoming garrulous,” said Kalmat. “ That Sunday in Dunelm and your wife ; I shall never forget the radiant beauty of her girlhood, and on that day in particular, when old Waller at the organ seemed as if he had set it to music, and was rehearsing the poetry of it in an harmonious and melodic idyll. He was a master of sweet sounds ; she might have inspired and warmed a statue into life. Shaseta was about her age when first I saw her, and the remembrance of both is strongly fixed in my mind. Clytie’s face and figure are surrounded by crumbling moss-grown walls, that glass themselves in a river ; by old English trees with rocks in them ; by meadows and woodland walks. Shaseta the Indian maiden comes upon me in the light of camp fires, and her cry goes up to heaven in the midst of a dropping fire of rifles and revolvers. Her father fell in that bitter Indian warfare ; I saved her life and was rewarded by an expression of

the eye, and a pout of the lips that carried me back to Dunelm, and touched a chord in my heart, and awakened strangely sad, sweet memories."

"You deserve to be happy, my friend," said Lord St. Barnard; "but it would seem, in this life, that they who most deserve are often the least blessed."

"Happiness is a relative term."

"But we define it practically."

"We are never content," said Kalmat. "The chief sources of happiness lie in the affections and the understanding."

"Unless one is a poet," said his lordship, "and then the pleasures of imagination, I should say, are above all earthly sensations."

"Fancy lifts one above the reality, and that is happiness while it lasts; but we fall back upon memory, which is like the relapse after opium. There was a time when I thought only physical pleasures happiness; but this was during a period of hardship, when a mining camp was blocked



with snow for months, and we had little to eat or drink."

"You have suffered privation?"

"Not for want of money; we had money during this snowstorm, plenty of gold; but we were cold and hungry. I used to think in those days that the only real miseries in life were the physical pangs of hunger and cold."

"Mental pain must be a more acute misery."

"You think so at the time; but eat nothing for two days, and have no fire in the midst of frost and snow, and your noblest theories and sentiments will be shaken. I think I have suffered all kinds of misfortune and trouble—unrequited love, jealousy, heartbreak, exile, hunger, the misery of witnessing persecution without being able to rescue the victim; everything that man can suffer; I hope I am a philosopher at last."

"You are a poet, which is better."

"I do not know; I fear there is a flaw in my philosophy, to judge by the stan-

dards ; for I experience the joy of revenge, and do not recognize the law of forgiveness in its breadth and integrity."

"It is human to feel the desire of revenge ; unwise, un-Christian, to exercise it. Revenge is a rough justice, which only anticipates the more perfect judgment of heaven."

"You think so ; your philosophy has the true colour of society in it. But I agree with the Indian, whose instinct is the law of a tooth for a tooth. Retaliation is the impulse of the savage, and he is the child of nature—depend upon it he is not far wrong. Revenge, retaliation, is the sweetest of all the realized passions."

"You speak with great feeling ; but you are an earnest man in all things."

"Too earnest for society, too impulsive for your great world of London."

"And yet with your sympathetic nature I would have expected to see you enjoy the exciting intellectual life of town. You believe in the monastic notion of happiness, that condition in which man is inde-

pendent of his fellows ; a recluse, living upon the enjoyment of reflection and study ?”

“ Partly ; give me, with the absence of conventionality, the excitement of the chase, the charm of wild life beyond the Golden Gates. Don’t confound the recluse with the misanthrope ; he is a wretch to be greatly pitied.”

“ But we associate the sentiments of the misanthrope with that spirit of revenge which you applaud.”

“ You do wrong, then. The man who hates his fellows is indeed miserable. Revenge is a noble passion. There are things, as Byron says,

“ Which make revenge a virtue by reflection  
And not an impulse of mere anger ; though  
The laws sleep, justice wakes, and injured souls  
Oft do a public right with private wrong,  
And justify their deeds unto themselves.”

“ When you talk of revenge I have always that man Ransford present before me,” replied St. Barnard.

Kalimat smiled.

"Your face lights up at mention of him."

"Yes," said Kalimat ; "you will know the reason soon. I can bear to talk of him now."

"Did you know him well in your early days?"

"Only slightly. Mary Waller did not care for him. Poorgirl, she cared for neither of us, and she told me so with an innocent frankness that was touching in its simplicity of ingenuous surprise. Ah, Barnard, if you have ever doubted the truth and honour of that truly noble woman, that child of nature, you have wronged the best and most persecuted of her sex."

"You have saved us both, my dear, dear friend," said St. Barnard, taking Kalimat's hand.

"The London papers," said an English servant, handing the journals of the previous day to Kalimat. "You requested me to bring them the moment they arrived."

Boulogne. To the Coroner sitting at the 'Cuttle Fish' Inn, Longreach, near Erith, London. Special messenger paid for from Erith. I am here with my wife. Came over in the 'Fairy' steam yacht, as stated by Mr. Cuffing in his evidence reported in the London papers; called at the 'Cuttle Fish' Inn, en route, but did not see Ransford. Cuffing's statement as to the confession and other matters true. Shall attend at Bow Street on Monday. Regret that Lady St. Barnard is too ill to be removed at present. The suicide of Ransford is a very sad ending to a most melancholy business. He did all he could in the way of atonement before committing the last rash act of his life."

Then Kalmat sent for Lord St. Barnard, and gave him the papers to read.

"What is the meaning of it?" he asked, when he had read the report.

"I killed the scoundrel," said Kalmat.

Lord St. Barnard shrunk back for a moment with an expression of horror.

“It was a duel. I gave him a chance of his life. He fired on me when I was unprepared. Before he could repeat the trick, I shot him.”

“He deserved it ; but do you know that in England we call this a most grave offence ? It may at least place your liberty in danger. Some people would call it murder.”

“I have thought of that, and will explain all if you think I should ; but for your own comfort, I see a better plan. This statement of Cuffing, and the confession, rehabilitates your wife even in the eyes of society. It may not be necessary now to seek the distant land which your feet would tread reluctantly. The peace of Grassnook, and the hollow pleasures of the Court, may be yours again as soon as your wife has recovered. And you would not like to take your children to that wild country of mine beyond the Golden Gates. I have noticed how your heart clung to Grassnook and England. Well, here is a sudden incident that favours all

—the suicide of this scoundrel, and the double confession contained in Cuffing's remarkable evidence."

"There are flaws in the story that may reopen the social wound," said his lordship.

"I think not. Can you trust me? Will you let me still be your guide through this last bit of darkness that hides the daylight?"

"I will, with one piece of advice which I would impress upon you strongly—do not let us place ourselves in the hands of Cuffing."

"I note the point indelibly. Cuffing, as Ransford's lawyer, had a perfect right to change the details of the terms as regards money. Read that."

Kalmat handed a copy of his telegram to Lord St. Barnard, who read it.

"You think I have been rash?"

"No," said his lordship. "I reserve my opinion; I am in your hands; command, I obey."

"The doctor agrees with me that the

moment your wife comes back to sensibility, she should have a kindly message from you, say by telegram—that will be to-morrow; then a letter—that will be on Monday; then she should be embraced by her husband—that will be on Tuesday. We must take this evening's steamer to Folkestone."

"Send for me half an hour before the boat starts," said his lordship.

A few hours afterwards, travelling from Folkestone to London, they read in the evening papers the conclusion of the inquest.

A witness was called who described a gentleman like Lord St. Barnard being rowed from Erith pier to the landing-place at the "Cuttle Fish," at about nine o'clock. The witness said two of the crew of the "Fairy" were waiting off Longreach at the same time, and the gentleman said they would take him up on his return.

Another witness stated that he drove a gentleman in that direction on the land side of the Longreach, to within a mile of



the "Cuttle Fish," and while this witness was giving his evidence, the gentleman in question entered the room, and explained that he was a coal dealer, and expected a barge coming up the Thames that night, and as two of his vessels had been robbed lately while moored off the Reach, he was there to look after them himself.

The porter at Piccadilly corroborated Cuffing's statement as to the treatment he had received in Ransford's chambers.

In re-examination the surgeon stated that he found strong evidence of the intemperate habits of the deceased. The liver was enlarged and degenerated.

Mr. Cuffing produced the copy of Ransford's confession, which was printed in full. The reading of it created great sensation in the coroner's little court.

At this stage of the inquiry, Lord St. Barnard's telegram arrived. The coroner, in summing up the case, pointed out that the telegram was not evidence, and it might be well to adjourn with a view to Lord St. Barnard being present.

The foreman, however, consulted with his colleagues, and said that they were of opinion that no more evidence was necessary to enable them to arrive at a verdict.

The coroner then repeated the leading points of the depositions, and dwelt upon them at much length. He arrived at this conclusion; that while the evidence strongly favoured the assumption of suicide, it was not, he thought, strong enough absolutely to convince them that the man had killed himself. At the same time there was no circumstance that pointed to foul play; but the affair was enshrouded in an atmosphere sufficiently mysterious, he thought, to warrant the jury in recording an open verdict, not taking upon themselves the responsibility of saying whether the deceased met with his death by his own felonious act, or that he killed himself during a fit of insanity, or whether he met with his death at the hand of some person or persons unknown. It was quite clear, from the statement of Mr. Cuffing, who, he was bound to say, had given his evidence in the most

clear and straightforward manner, that the deceased was suffering greatly from the pangs of remorse. The unfounded charges which he had made against a virtuous and high-minded lady, had driven his victim to distraction, and had dragged the name and fame of her noble husband in the mud.

His lordship had felt compelled to resign all his appointments, and his wife was now lying between life and death in a state of insensibility at Boulogne. No wonder that remorse should attack a man of education, as the deceased undoubtedly was, the moment conscience was awakened within him. For some days he had been confined at Bow Street, and not being able to keep himself up with drink, he came out of prison weakened and depressed, and in this state remorse took hold upon him, and he made that confession which would reinstate Lord and Lady St. Barnard in their high place in society, and be a warning, he hoped, how scandals were received and believed by society and the public (ap-  
plause). Mr. Cuffing played the part of a

true gentleman in bringing this confession to the knowledge of Lord St. Barnard ; and there is nothing surprising in the fact that, following this attack of remorse, the deceased should apply himself once more to the stimulus of drink, and regret, in his half-drunken moments, the confession which had leaked out of his weakness. All this granted, and suicide, however much it might shock them, would not be a surprising end to such a career. If they thought this should be their verdict, they need not be deterred by feeling that their decision closed the affair ; for if the police saw reason to re-open the matter, there were several ways of bringing it before the cognizance of the county magistrates.

The jury returned a verdict that the deceased shot himself while labouring under a fit of remorse or temporary insanity.

When Lord St. Barnard had digested the report he and Kalmat looked inquiringly at each other.

"How did you go to the 'Cuttle Fish?'" asked his lordship.

"I twice visited the hotel at Erith, but I left there early on the day in question, first by cab, with my luggage to the station, and then by train to London. In the afternoon I took a steamer to a station beyond Woolwich, then a boat to the 'Fairy.' In the evening the 'Fairy's' boat landed me a mile below Longreach, and I walked to the 'Cuttle Fish,' timing myself almost to the minute. If it were not for Cuffing's narrative, which it would be a mistake to disturb, and the undesirability of further complications, so far as you are concerned, I would rather have told my own story, and—but it is best as it is."

There was silence between the two for some time after this. The train rattled along at a dead level pace through the beautiful Kentish hop-fields. Kalmat took up the papers again, and found a short leading article in one of them extolling the conduct of Mr. Cuffing. The article was headed "Advocate and Client." It re-

flected in the severest terms upon solicitors and counsel acting and pledging themselves to what they know to be untrue. Several instances of 'counsel fighting for culprits after private confessions of guilt, were instanced; and the manly and righteous position which Mr. Cuffing had taken up in this wretched business of the malignant persecution of Lord and Lady St. Barnard, was warmly extolled.

Cuffing, sitting in his new office in the dingy court off Bow Street, had already perused this article, with a self-congratulatory smile. He borrowed a little money from his sister, and purchased himself, ready-made, a new coat and a pair of black kid gloves. He invested in a couple of new shirts, a dark-coloured neckcloth, and a new hat. When he presented himself before his sister in this respectable array, she was overwhelmed with astonishment.

"Never saw you look so smart and so much like a gentleman," she said.

"Read that article, Selina," said Cuffing,

handing her the paper. "Must make up to my new part, you see. Am going in for the highly-virtuous and respectable now. In the morning you will see all the papers breaking out in this same strain. The subject is a good one just now. The duties, privileges, and responsibilities of advocates, the licence of counsel, practice at the bar, are questions always interesting to the public, and at the present moment leader writers will delight in airing their knowledge of judicial procedure, the curiosities of evidence, the difference between our practice and that of France. Then the statutory declaration will come in for discussion, and the crime of malicious perjury, the social death of maligned virtue and its resurrection through the conscientiousness of a comparatively poor but courageous and high-minded solicitor. There is no knowing how far the newspapers will go in advertising your most fortunate brother. My triumph in court on Monday will make me the envied of the whole profession. If I had a friend of any influence at all I might

see a public subscription started, culminating in the present to me of a few thousand pounds, and my portrait by some swell painter."

"How you do go on," said Mrs. Selina Camp.

"Not at all," said Cuffing; "I am keeping well within the circle of probability. I had serious thoughts of wearing a white choker, but it is a mistake to overdo anything. Selina, you have played a sister's part towards me; you shall share my good fortune. I shall have a house out of town, you shall take charge of it; I shall never marry. My eye is already fixed upon offices in Gray's Inn. I am going to be very good all the remainder of my life. No more seedy clients, no more shady cases; Simon Cuffing shall be known for his intense respectability. I mean to go to church to-morrow. There is a decent-looking place on the other side of Covent Garden Market. I dare say I shall be known there."



"You always were clever," said Mrs. Camp.

"Only wanted the opportunity to rise ; have got it, you shall see," Cuffing answered.

"You said so once before."

"I thought the opportunity which I anticipated had come ; I was mistaken."

"This time then you are sure you are right ?"

"Quite sure."

"Well you are not likely to make a botch of it as my husband did, poor fellow ; you are strong ; there is no end of life in you, Simon."

"I hope so ; had a narrow squeak the other day at the hands of that thief Ransford. Your husband, by the way, was a clever man ?"

"Middling ; too clever, perhaps ; he made a practice of deceiving everybody, and I think that is a mistake."

"Certainly it is. Look at me ; I play my cards judiciously. Life is simply a game at which we should all play to win. If

you can win fairly by all means win fairly. Nothing can be pleasanter I should say than the general practice of honesty ; and at the same time nothing is more wretched than to be poor. In these days it is a positive crime. We will try and get out of this criminal groove, Selina ; and once we are out of the gutter and on the sidewalk, trust to me for keeping there."

"I begin to think you are really a great man," said Selina, eyeing her brother with a proud expression of face.

"You shall see! my foot is on the ladder ; never fear but I will mount to the top."

Meanwhile the Folkestone train arrived at Charing Cross, and in due time Kalmat and Lord St. Barnard were once more at the Westminster Palace Hotel. Mr. White, the detective, had called just as they entered. He was greatly surprised to meet Lord St. Barnard, but did not show his astonishment ; he was too clever for that. The people at the hotel had already informed Mr. White that his lordship was on

the Continent, and neither they nor he had yet read the evening papers containing the report of the second day's proceedings at the "Cuttle Fish." White had been baffled in his inquiries after Lady St. Barnard, and had called at the hotel to learn what he could about his lordship's movements.

"Seen the evening paper, of course?" said Lord St. Barnard.

"No, my lord," said Mr. White, who knew when it was well to make admissions and when not.

"Indeed; take a seat then, and read, while my friend and myself dress."

Mr. White read, and silently cursed himself for not having perused the paper on his own account; but the truth was he had been very busy in working a wrong scent, and the occupation had absorbed him thoroughly.

He was a retired officer of Scotland Yard, Mr. White, who did business on his own account, and was generally regarded as an eminently successful man in his pro-

fession ; and in his own mind he resented Lord St. Barnard's unaided discovery of his wife. He was troubled as to the way in which he should make up for his mistake. The presence at the Westminster of the mysterious spectator at Bow Street puzzled him. Was this gentleman a rival detective ? He did not see that Kalmat had entered the room, and was contemplating him cursorily.

"Ten pounds for your thoughts, Mr. White ?"

"Agreed," said the detective ; "I would have sold them cheaper."

Kalmat laid a note in White's open hand.

"I was wondering who you might be ; I know now that you are not what I took you for."

Kalmat looked inquiringly for further explanation.

"Not a detective," said White.

"Professionally no," said Kalmat.

"I saw you at Bow Street, and had my eye on you continually."

"Yes, I remember," said Kalmat. "Lord St. Barnard says I may trust you."

"The late Earl trusted me, when I was at Scotland Yard and after; the present Earl has been liberality itself," said Mr. White.

"I am not without means," said Kalmat, "am perhaps as rich as the Earl himself."

The ferret-like eyes of Mr. White sparkled.

"I am going to trust you with my secret, and then we must work together, just to wind up this business: I am Tom Mayfield!"

Mr. White was an elderly man, but full of activity. He jumped from his seat, whistled a long whistle, and then executed an excited "walk round." Tom looked on patiently. When Mr. White had sufficiently relieved himself from the shock of Kalmat's announcement he said with calm deliberation:

"Then I know your secret."

"Yes; that is my secret."

---

"You have another, sir," said Mr. White.

"Well?"

"May I be straight with you?"

"Certainly."

"You shot that brute Ransford."

Kalmat appeared to receive the blow with perfect calmness, though it staggered him considerably.

"Yes," he said.

"It was a duel?"

"It would have been if he had not tried to assassinate me after refusing to fight."

"Popped at you unawares?"

"Yes."

"And then you peppered him. I honour you, sir, let us shake hands. I saw that you hated him like poison."

"Mr. White, you are a shrewd and clever man. Talking of poison there is a tooth in the serpent's jaw of this Mr. Cuffing which we must extract."

"By all means."

"Lord St. Barnard places himself in our

hands ; he says he would trust you with his life."

" He is very good, and I would lay down my life for his lordship, if required so to do."

" It does not suit us to correct the mis-statements of Cuffing ; and it does not suit us to let him have power over us ; to leave him the opportunity some day of making his own corrections."

" Right."

" We are quite willing to place him above temptation."

" You'll pay him the ten thou. ?"

" Yes ; but we want guarantees, as nations say to each other."

" Want a hold on him ?"

" Yes."

" I've got it ; been off and on devoting myself to that."

" Good."

" He's a forger and a thief. Do you remember a trial called the Higgleton will case ?"

" I do not."

"It came to nothing for want of evidence ; there was a will, produced by Cuffing a year after search for a will had been made without success ; Higgleton, he was a cousin of Cuffing's ; but while the trial was going on a second and later will was found, dated only a day after Cuffing's, and it was the genuine will. It was called 'The Higgleton Romance ;' the case was fully reported in all the papers. Well, a pal of mine had it in hand, but as the right people came in for the property, they didn't care about going on with the prosecution of Cuffing, suspected of forging the first will, and it dropped through ; but my pal has given me all the facts and documents, and the witnesses are living, and can be got at any time. Isn't that a hold on him ?"

"Good enough, as they say in America."

"Well, as confessions and such like are the order of the day, he shall confess and swear an affidavit about his being confederate with Ransford. If you like, you shall handle him how you please, and have his



tooth out straight ; and the best way will be to make me and the youngest partner in his lordship's solicitors' firm, trustees to a settlement upon him to be paid regularly according to his good behaviour."

"Excellent ; can we find him to-night ?"

"Yes ; he's moved, did it cleverly I believe, but I know his new place. Shall we go at once ?"

"Where do you propose to go at once ?" asked Lord St. Barnard.

"We wish to call together on Mr. Simon Cuffing," said Kalmat.

"I have ordered dinner—it will be ready in ten minutes," said his lordship.

"I don't think either of us will eat much," said Kalmat, "and Mr. White's time is valuable. We will go now, I think ; and in the meantime you will send for your solicitor."

"I am in your hands," said his lordship.

"We shall return soon," said Kalmat.

"Of course you will not forget the letter to Boulogne."

Lord St. Barnard bowed, and shook

---

Kalimat's hand. Mr. White respectfully opened the door for his new friend, and followed him; and the master of Grassnook sat down to write a long and loving letter to his wife.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ODD TRICK.



SOMEWHAT startling knock at Mrs. Camp's door, aroused Mr. Simon Cuffing from a reverie over the kitchen fire, which had been lighted to dry the Saturday night's linen.

Mrs. Camp was ironing a shirt in which her brother was to appear at church the next morning; while Cuffing was arranging in his mind the heads of the speech he intended to make at Bow Street on Monday.

"That's a business knock," said Cuffing.

"Why it's ten o'clock," said Mrs. Camp in a tone of alarm.

"It is a business summons, nevertheless."

"Summons, what do you mean, Simon?"

"Don't be alarmed, Selina, I am here. Say I am within, but about to retire. If the business is pressing, show them into the parlour. Bring their names to me, and take note of their appearance."

The knock was loudly repeated. Selina went to the door. Presently she returned.

"Well?" said Cuffing.

"Mr. White, and a friend," said Selina.

Cuffing looked puzzled, but only for a moment.

"Is he the detective?" asked Selina, with undisguised apprehension.

"The same," said Cuffing, smoothing his hair and arranging his neckcloth.

"Not come to—"

Cuffing laid his hand upon Mrs. Camp's shoulder, with an air of patronage and pity.

"I hope you are safe, Simon; but the name of Mr. White gives me a turn."

"Mr. White is a child in the hands of your brother," said Cuffing, taking snuff and walking slowly up the kitchen stairs and into the parlour.

"Good-evening, Mr. Cuffing," said the detective; "allow me to introduce my friend Mr. Mayfield."

Cuffing bowed. For a moment he could not conceal his astonishment, though he speedily recovered himself.

"We apologize for our late visit."

"I am glad to see you, Mr. White," said Cuffing; "and you, Mr. Mayfield; I quite expected to have this honour, sooner or later."

"Indeed," said Kalmat.

"I saw you in Court and knew you," said Cuffing, taking his snuff-box, and quietly congratulating himself upon this stroke of impudence and policy.

"Knew him?" repeated Mr. White.

"Knew him, sir," said Cuffing; "and if Ransford were alive he would endorse what I say, for I mentioned Mr. Mayfield's presence in Court frequently to him. Don't

imagine, Mr. White, that you are the only detective in London."

Mr. White looked at Kalmat, who smiled, and said Mr. Cuffing's observant faculties were well developed.

"They are, sir ; I can see as far through a wall as most people."

"That is a good thing for you," said White ; "as you are likely to have some practice on the walls of Millbank."

Cuffing staggered under this straight hit.

"It is only a matter of imagination," said Kalmat.

" 'Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.' "

"When you have done paying compliments," said Cuffing, "perhaps you will do me the honour to explain the purpose of this visit."

"Pardon me, White, a moment," said Kalmat. "I will put the case to Mr. Cuffing. Lord St. Barnard is not satisfied with your eloquent but somewhat fictitious statement to the jury at Longreach."

"Indeed, he ought to be very well content with it," said Cuffing.

"He is not," replied Kalmat ; "but, under the advice of Mr. White and myself, may possibly be induced to accept the situation as he finds it,—on conditions."

"Conditions !" exclaimed Cuffing ; "why your friend would have been under arrest for murder had I not gone out of my way to protect him."

Kalmat smiled, and waved his hand authoritatively for silence.

"Hear what I have to say, Mr. Cuffing ; you have played your game cleverly, but we hold the odd trick, I assure you. It is quite clear that you have miscounted a suit."

"I think not," said Cuffing.

"Our conditions are that you confess your complicity with Ransford."

Cuffing laughed derisively.

"We shall pay you the ten thousand pounds—a piece of absurd waste, but no matter ; Lord St. Barnard would prefer to fight the case out to the end and prose-

cute you; but he has friends who advise him; he listens to Mr. White and myself."

"Indeed; I cannot commend his judgment," said Cuffing.

"You will presently," said Kalmat.

"I told Ransford you would turn up some day and shoot him," said Cuffing, "and I don't think it would be difficult to produce evidence on that head. My dear sir, you should not have come here; you never made a greater mistake."

It was a clever shot; but it made no impression upon Kalmat.

"You amuse me," said Kalmat. "You ought to rise in your profession."

"I am rising; the honour of entertaining two such distinguished visitors as Mr. White and Mr. Tom Mayfield at this late hour is sufficient testimony to my progress."

"Don't be too fast," said Mr. White, in an angry tone.

"Half a dozen lines is all I require," said Kalmat: "'I was confederate with



Ransford in the unfounded charge against Lady St. Barnard—Signed, S. Cuffing ;' will be quite sufficient."

"How dare you insult me in this way?" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Have you a pen and ink?" Kalmat replied.

"My reply is that I request you to leave this house; if you wish to repeat this conversation meet me at Bow Street on Monday morning."

"Now, Mr. White," said Kalmat, "I think you may make that little communication of yours to Mr. Cuffing. I can only take him by the collar and shake the life out of him, and that I suppose would be a piece of incivility which society would condemn. May I smoke?"

Cuffing made no reply. Mr. White had laid his hand upon his shoulder in such a professional manner that Cuffing was quite paralyzed for a moment.

"Come this way," said White. "I am sure you may smoke, Mr. Mayfield."

"Thank you," said Kalmat, lighting a

cigar, while White and Cuffing sat down at the farthest end of the room, where White appeared to have all the whispering and talking his own way. In less than five minutes Cuffing rose, and said aloud :

“You are right ; I had miscalculated ; you hold the odd trick.”

“Very well,” said Mr. White, “write just what Mr. Mayfield dictates.”

Cuffing sat down. Kalmat rose, and with his cigar still between his teeth, said :

“I, Simon Cuffing, in the presence of Mr. White and Mr. Mayfield, whose signatures are annexed, with the date hereof, confess that I am a forger, a thief——”

“No, no,” said Cuffing, “those were not the terms of the——”

“Write,” said Kalmat. “You refused the first simple confession.”

“We give you five minutes,” said White.

“A forger and a thief,” said Kalmat, “of which Mr. White holds proof, and that I was confederate with Philip Rans-

ford in the libellous and brutal charges made against Lady St. Barnard ; and that I can never be sufficiently grateful to his lordship for accepting my abject and humble apologies and promise of good behaviour, instead of prosecuting me as I deserve. I am indebted for this great kindness to the interposition of Mr. White and Mr. Mayfield, in consideration of which I place myself entirely and humbly in their hands."

Cuffing wrote deliberately as Kalmat dictated, and signed the document, which was properly witnessed.

"That will do," said Kalmat, folding up the paper and depositing it in the breast-pocket of his coat.

Cuffing sighed and looked anxiously at White. Then turning to Kalmat, he said, "And what am I to do on Monday?"

"Better follow up the policy of Longreach ; that is for your own judgment. You may consider this document as altogether out of existence, so far as any unfair use of it is concerned."

“The fact is Mr. Mayfield thought you had a tooth that ought to be drawn.”

“And having the tooth in my pocket,” said Kalmat, “Mr. Cuffing has only to keep his bail of good behaviour; he and I are not likely to meet again.”

“You may trust me,” said Cuffing; “and what about the money I mentioned in my address to the Coroner?”

“You shall have it,” said Kalmat.

“Thank you, thank you!” exclaimed Cuffing. “Sir, I thank you, and I apologize for my rudeness. When shall I have it?”

“On Monday night.”

“Oh, thank you,” said Cuffing, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; “you are a true gentleman. I always said so to that scoundrel Ransford.”

“Good-night,” said Kalmat.

Cuffing opened the door obsequiously, and his visitors disappeared.

Selina, who had been vainly trying to overhear the conversation through the key-

hole, rushed into the room. Cuffing had flung himself into a chair.

"Well, Simon, well; I fear bad news, eh?"

"Selina, embrace me," said Cuffing, rising.

"My dear Simon," said Selina, bursting into tears, "this is the first time my arms have been round your neck since we were children."

"Bless you, Selina! I never felt the need of sympathy so much; I feel as if I could scream with joy; I have had a very narrow escape, but it is over. I shall go to church in the morning."

"My dear Simon."


"On Monday I shall astonish Bow Street; at night I shall be rich; the offices in Gray's Inn will not be to let after ten o'clock on Tuesday."

"Oh, Simon!"

"There! Thank you, Selina. You are a good woman—now go and finish ironing my shirt."

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE ADJOURNMENT.

T Bow Street, on Monday morning, Mr. Holland, Q.C., made an eloquent speech, travelling over the leading features of the extraordinary case in which Lord St. Barnard, with the courage of an English nobleman, and the earnestness of a good cause, had entered upon the prosecution of Philip Ransford, whose confession and death had brought the story of Lady Barnard's persecution to an end, so far as this Court was concerned. Mr. Holland was glad to observe that the newspapers in discussing the case that day had expressed the deepest sympathy with Lord St. Barnard,

---

and the warmest admiration for his wife, whom they could not sufficiently praise for her fortitude, or pity enough on account of the final break down of her physical strength under the weight of calumnies that might have overcome even Spartam fortitude. Never had the cruelty of man's nature developed itself into so malignant a form as that which led Philip Ransford to found, upon seeming truth, the outrageous and horrible charge which had overwhelmed his clients and himself in that Court. The poet had truly said that the worst of lies were those in which some truth was found. It was Philip Ransford's early acquaintance with Lady St. Barnard that gave such odious colour to the prisoner's statements. The Court would be glad to hear that the woman who attended Lady St. Barnard at Piccadilly during the night referred to in her ladyship's evidence was in Court ; and that other witnesses, if they had been required, were ready to come forward to substantiate the perfect innocence of his client, apart from the prisoner's confession.

All this was now rendered unnecessary ; and it gave him great pleasure to inform the Bench that Lady St. Barnard was progressing favourably. She had safely passed through the delirious stages of brain fever, and it was a source of much happiness for Lord St. Barnard that one of the first inquiries this morning as to the state of her ladyship's health, came from her most gracious Majesty with a kindly and queenly message to his lordship (loud applause).

Mr. Cuffing—in his new coat, with his necktie embellishing a perfectly white collar—rose, and in solemn terms expressed his deep regret that it should ever have fallen to his professional lot to be engaged in a case that must have wounded so severely the nicest and most delicate sensibilities of a highly-wrought and noble nature such as that of Lady St. Barnard. He need not remind Mr. Holland and his Worship on the Bench, that an advocate had only to consider the interests of his client. It was his duty to lay aside all private feeling ; but it was not his duty, if



he knew it, to be a party to a wrong, to be, as it were, confederate with his client to perpetuate an injustice ; and the moment he was made acquainted with the falsity of the charges made by his client, that moment he demanded restitution and atonement for the persecuted lady. In arranging this, however, he had endeavoured to do so in a manner that would be the least injurious to his client ; and it was a consolation to know that his conduct was approved by public opinion (applause). He would not detain the Court. His explanation, made before the Coroner at Longreach, was already in the papers, and correctly reported ; and he had only to say, in conclusion, that nothing could be more ample than the confession which his unfortunate client had made, and was prepared to repeat in open court, if necessary, prior to his laying violent hands upon himself. His client was beyond further defence, the prosecutor was above reproach, and he begged to thank the magistrate for his

patience and forbearance during a most painful and cruel investigation.

The Magistrate, ignoring both Mr. Holland and Mr. Cuffing, observed that a dead man was said to have paid all debts, and it would ill become the Bench to animadvert upon the conduct of the person who, had he been living, would have been expected to surrender himself that morning to the officers of this Court. He, nevertheless, congratulated Lord St. Barnard upon the complete justification of the prosecution of this unfortunate man, who had unwisely rushed before another and more solemn tribunal. The libeller's death was a gain to society, for a more malicious or dastardly social persecution could not have entered into the mind of man than that which he had so long carried on against a lady whose conduct in the witness-box was in every respect the manner and expression of a pure-minded and noble woman. He begged to congratulate Lord St. Barnard upon the conclusion of the case, and also upon that immediate recognition from the noblest

lady in the land, who was a pattern to all classes, to all society, now and for all time.

During the day, the Westminster Palace Hotel and Grassnook were besieged with callers. At night the cards on Lord St. Barnard's table at the hotel might have been counted by hundreds ; while at Grassnook Mrs. and Mr. Breeze expressed such joy over supper in the servants' hall, that Jeames was almost scandalized at their behaviour.

"It's no matter, as I always told Johnny," said Mrs. Breeze, who, by-the-way, had felt just the contrary, though she was always for keeping up other people's spirits—"it's no matter, I always said, however dark the clouds may be, there's light behind them ; and there, I'm sure, nothing could have been more denser than the clouds as we've had upon us, one and all. Though it fell to my lot to have the audacity to say, not knowing at the time how much she was above me, I would, God willing, be a mother to her ladyship, I've never seen a moment's reason to lose

my respect for her, or to believe her anything but the good and blessed lady as looks through her own dear eyes at all times."

"You were always right in your prognostics, Mrs. Breeze, always," said Johnny.

"No I was not, Mr. Breeze—let me be truthful. That Ransford deceived me, truly he deceived me, and I've often laid my head down and cried bitter, to think as I persuaded my dear girl, my own lovely lady, to permit of his calling upon her. But has she ever reproached me with it? No, reproach ain't in her nature. Though it is quite in my memory as I said, 'You might call me mother, though it would make me feel older than I like, but a mother I'll be to you; and as to your being an actress, don't, don't do it, but if you do, write to your grandfather.' And to think as her real grandfather was a living in this very house, and having the gout, like all great lords when they are old. Why it's a romance that nothing I ever read in the penny papers which we took in when I

was a girl weekly, nothing, I say, ever came up to."

"All our ancient families," said Jeames, "'ave their romantic 'istories. One of the Countesses of Darby was an hactress, and it is geneologically and paranthetically true that this kind of mixture 'as halways given strength and tone to the natural haristocracy."

"Don't talk so fine," remarked the cook, "don't, it sets my teeth on edge to hear you, James, it do."

The other servants giggled, and Jeames cast a glance of contemptuous pity all round.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen," said Breeze, rising to his feet, with a glass in his hand, "I think, with Mrs. Breeze's permission, we should drink a toast."

"Yes, Breeze, yes," said Mrs. Breeze, wiping away with her apron a few stray tears. "Yes, welcome home, and God bless them."

"A toast. I ain't much of a speaker; but I can truly say that, up to now, this is

the happiest day of my life " (hear, hear).  
"A happier day, however, will be that  
when our noble master and mistress come  
home again to Grassnook."

"Yes, that be the time of day," said the  
kitchen-maid.

"Don't hinterrupt," said Jeames, with a  
lofty frown.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I was about to  
say that the happiest day would be  
when——"

"Lord and Lady St. Barnard," interpolated Jeames.

"Our noble master and mistress," said  
Mrs. Breeze, "is the proper expression,  
and I don't hold with specifying them as  
anything else, and if any one might do it,  
surely it is Mr. Breeze, who has had the  
honour of being in her Majesty's service,  
and been on speaking terms with the aris-  
tocracy, not as a servant, but as an officer;  
yes, Mr. James, I repeat, an officer of the  
Government, and at the same time always  
spoken to by her ladyship that kindly, as  
I says; nothing can derogate from Mr.

Breeze's position as a Government officer and his gratitude to her ladyship."

Cries of "hear, hear," and applause, interrupted Mrs. Breeze, not, however, in a very complimentary way. There was a slight smack of derision in the pretended commendation.

"Well, no matter, I am not in possession of the chair, as they say, so let Mr. Breeze finish his speech, and never let it be said that there was a disagreement among us on a subject which in our hearts, I am sure, we all feel in the same way, though the expression may be different."

A genuine burst of applause greeted this sentiment, and Johnny once more rose to his feet.

"As I was saying, when our noble master and mistress come home, that will be the happiest day of all our lives" (hear, hear); "for they are—Lord and Lady St. Barnard, I mean, of course—are beloved by all, and they are ornaments of that society who have been here in crowds to-day, showing that when you are victorious

it is all right, and your friends are with you, and wicey versa if you happen to be otherwise" (cheers). "But it ain't no matter, for it will make no difference to us, anything but the happiness of that kind lady and my lord, who are all we think about, and who, I am sure, we could all lay down our lives for them" (hear, hear). "And what I've got to say is, 'Happy have we been, happy may remain, happy meet again,'" (loud cheers).

"And their health, Johnny, and wishing them a speedy return, and God bless them," said Mrs. Breeze.

"Yes, yes, of course," replied Breeze, emptying his glass.

The servants followed the eminent P.K.'s example, and Grassnook rang with such merry-making as had rarely been heard except on Christmas eves in the olden days.

And at this time Kalmat and Lord St. Barnard were parting at the Westminster Palace Hotel.

"No, you had better go alone, Barnard,"



said Kalmat firmly. "It is necessary that I and White should have a final interview with Cuffing, and then comes back Peace to the house of St. Barnard."

"But when shall we meet again, my dear fellow? I can't bear the idea of parting with you. I have not yet given up that suggestion of yours, to live for some years out of England; moreover I——"

"No, my dear friend," said Kalmat, "it is not necessary now. Events have taken a turn which we did not anticipate. It was a selfish dream, too, that dream of mine, in which I saw you and her and your children in the far West, with myself teaching your boys to hunt and shoot; a selfish, ill-considered plan. It would have been a mistake; don't think of it. I will go back alone, I am only fit for that kind of existence, which wants nothing from society, from the world."

"My dear friend," said his lordship, clasping Kalmat's hand.

"You have conquered society; your triumph has been great; your justification

complete. Fate has been good to you at last."

"You were Fate."

"Let that thought so flattering to me sink into your heart. Tell her I was by your side in the hour of danger, and I wished no greater reward; and think, my dear Barnard, how unfit a man who can be so satisfied must be for cities and civilization. No, for the present we part here. Some day we shall meet again. If we do not, we shall sympathize so strongly with each other in joy and in sorrow, that we shall know when we are happy, and feel each other's sadness. Do you believe in that kind of sympathy, a love, a regard that is electrical, and travels as swiftly as lightning, that is not checked by space, by seas, by mountains, and does not come to an end even with death?"

"I think I understand you," said his lordship, "but I wish I could influence your decision. I am sure it will be a great disappointment to my wife not to meet you

again, not to thank you herself for all you have done for us."

"Believe me, my decision is the wisest. Say for me all that your kind heart may dictate. Telegraph me to-morrow how you find her; and the sooner you can bring her home to her children at Grassnook the better. Their sweet voices, and the soothing calm of the Thames meadows, will do more than all the doctors in the world to restore her to herself. And let me give you a last word or two of advice in the interest of our patient. When she has recovered consciousness, she will look back upon the Bow Street persecution and its attendant circumstances as a dream. Encourage this until she is well and strong; it will aid her recovery."

"You are the best and wisest fellow in the world," said his lordship.

"You cannot deceive her when she is once more master of herself, because history may not be obliterated, neither is it wise that there should be any divisions and secrets between man and wife; but for

some months to come she need not know anything but that which you choose to tell her. Good-bye, it is time you were on your way."

"I cannot say good-bye," said his lordship, with an undisguised expression of emotion. "Say we are to meet again soon."

"Yes, soon."

"And you will keep me acquainted of your movements?"

"I will," said Tom, with a responsive tremor in his voice.

"God bless you," said St. Barnard, pressing his hand to his lips, "my dear, dear friend."

Then Kalmat was alone. He sighed and wiped his eyes, which were wet with tears.

"It is best so," he said, "it is best so."

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN TWO HEMISPHERES ; AFTER A LAPSE OF  
YEARS.



WO years have elapsed since Kalmat and Lord St. Barnard separated at the Westminster Palace Hotel.

The early part of the time was full of pain and anxiety for St. Barnard. It was some months before his wife came out of that serious illness. The summer and the autumn were spent at Boulogne, but Clytie recovered in the midst of her little family. The children were sent for, and a house was taken overlooking the bay. Here, as consciousness and strength returned, the true memory of things came back. There are illnesses which blot out

the past, and Lord St. Barnard cherished a faint hope that there might be blanks in his wife's memory ; but it all came back to her, the time before she was taken ill ; it came back by degrees, like a returning tide, until at last it had filled all the little niches in Memory's temple, and the past was complete.

Then his lordship had to tell the story of her persecution, with special annotations ; then he had to read extracts from the newspapers, and show her how her innocence had been established, not in his eyes, for that were unnecessary, but in the opinion of the public.

It was not true, of course, that everybody believed in the honesty of the lady of Grassnook. Half a dozen hags of Dunelm gossiped adversely about her in the old city, but they were the representatives of the proverb about "old maids and mustard," and they must have some sort of revenge for their spinsterial misery, and so they may pass. London society of course recanted all it had said, not with the confession and

suicide of Ransford, but with the gracious message from the Court, with the restoration of Lord St. Barnard, not exactly in his former positions, but with still higher distinction. Wyldenberg and Barrington, and the gutter-tribe in morals who associated with them, still talked at their monkey-clubs of the days of the Delphos Theatre, and the rehearsals of Miss Pitt. The jealous and envious, the immoral, the scandal-monger, the disappointed, and the other mongrels of humanity, shook their heads and winked their bleary eyes ; but it is better to have the ill opinion of curs and sneaks, and things that crawl and creep, than to have their commendation. Fancy Caliban talking of his "friend" Prospero, and saying pleasant things of Miranda !

Clytie had some sad thoughts in her mind about this wretched minority of the sour and unworthy. She would have liked all the world to believe in her, but her husband put the case to her pretty much as we should all have put it under the circumstances, when Clytie was strong enough to talk

freely, which was not until late in the autumn of that most painful year.

"If you are content," she said, one evening towards the close of their stay at Boulogne, "it is not necessary that I should say I am happy. I sometimes think it was selfish, most selfish for me to marry you ; but I resisted, did I not ? Once it even entered into my mind to do or say something that should make you dislike me."

"That would have been impossible."

"But," continued the loving wife, looking out upon the sea in the calm evening, "I discovered that I loved you, I found my heart sending out messengers after you. The time began to be a blank when you were not there, and then I grew selfish."

"Not selfish, generous," said St. Bernard, "for to have lost you would have been to lose all interest in life."

"Is that so, truly, after all that has happened. Or do you say so now as my husband, because you are my husband, and because you are a true and high-minded



gentleman? I would not wrong your noble heart, but it is so sweet to hear you say you love me still."

"My own darling!"

"To hear you say that were I single now; even now you would not despise me."

"My dear wife, I hold myself so fortunate in having you here by my side, your eyes clear and bright once more, your voice the same soft, musical voice as I knew it first, that I think myself specially blessed; the more so that once, only for a moment, I doubted you. That is a cruel thing to say."

"No, no," replied Clytie, hurriedly, "I am glad of it, I am glad; it enhanced your faith the next moment; and it makes the present still happier to know that I might have been separated from you, to feel that there was this danger."

"Between a man and woman who love each other truly, there need be no secret of thought, or word, or deed. When I talk to you I converse with myself. I

would hold it wrong not to show you my heart, unless its doubting should have overshadowed its faith and love ; and then indeed it would not be my heart. That the hint of a cruel thought crept in there for a moment, is evidence of its humanity ; that my lasting love rushed in in battalions and turned the invader out, is my only answer to your just resentment."

" My own dear love, do I not say I am happier for this knowledge of even a passing danger ?"

" It was in my mind to tell you this, and now the only shadow on our lives has passed away like that cloud upon yonder bit of sea, leaving no trace behind ; for I count that other cloud as nothing since it did not affect our own mutual feelings. And I would have you, my own dear wife, go back to London, the brave and noble woman you are, go back and take your place, a queen in society, a countess in your own right ; not to be a slave to fashion, not to give up your time to form and ceremony, but to take your position, and

live it when and how it shall please you. It had entered into my mind to invite you to a solitary life, even to accept that wild poetic invitation of Kalmat, to visit his Golden West, and let the world slip by us as it listed. But we owe a duty to our children, to the name of St. Barnard, and to ourselves; and there will be much real happiness in being welcomed back again by your friends the Stavelys, the Bolsovers, by Tamar and Lady Semingfield, by the Dean, and the others who stood by you. No, we will return to the duties of our station, but we will reserve quiet days for ourselves at Grassnook, and next year repeat that happy tour through Italy which commenced our married life."

She laid her head upon his shoulder, and looked through the autumn sunshine into the promised spring.

The latter half of this two years brought back the light of happy days to Grassnook. Again the merry laugh of childhood went up to heaven with the song of birds. The well-known shallop glided quietly down the

river in the evening shade as first it did when the new countess smiled upon the old home of the Barnards, and brought back to the ancient house the summer of youthful days. And they had a house in town, famous for its atmosphere of art, celebrated for its reunions of fashion and intellect. Genius had one chief hope—to lay its offerings at the feet of the Countess of St. Barnard. Intellect rejoiced in the freedom of his lordship's dinners, the fame of his lordship's guests. Goodness and beauty obtained endorsement only at the countess's assemblies, and the scene of the lady's triumphs was that unpretentious house at Gloucester Gate, the gift of the old earl, her grandfather, thus completing the poetical justice of the situation so far as the lady was concerned, far more closely than she could ever dream of; and it was well for her peace of mind that neither she nor her lord himself had any knowledge of the old earl's vow: "No, St. Barnard, you shall rescue her, if possible, and save her from herself, if Fate permits. But Bank-

side, and Weardale, and Grassnook shall go intact to my nephew and his children ;” and forthwith he laid the train that should explode all his selfish plans. Bankside, and Weardale, and Grassnook flourish under the smile of Frank Barnard’s child, and she has restored the fame and glory of the ancient name. She has had courage enough to live though the armies of envy, hatred, and malice came up against her; and her children, and her children’s children, shall be great and powerful in the land.

And what shall Mr. Simon Cuffing’s punishment be? And when? The great Judge is inscrutable. It is not for us to falsify history. It would seem to our narrow vision that the wicked and the unworthy often prosper most. The reader can furnish his or her own examples. Mr. Chute Woodfield, by-the-way, came to utter grief last year; his theatre, the gossips say, was too respectable; and Mr. Wyl登berg is thriving now, and drives his mail-phæton to the Delphos Theatre.

Mr. Barrington's business is still prosperous, and will continue to be so as long as there are bad passions to feed, and managers of theatres who consent to play the part of Pander to Vice. As the millennium is but a poetic dream, this state of things may be expected to go on, but Mr. Woodfield and Mr. Wyldenberg may change places in the matter of financial strength or weakness any day. It is Mr. Cuffing who troubles us.

"Mr. Simon Cuffing" shines out on plate of brass in Gray's Inn, challenging all beholders.

The lawyer who refused to be the receptacle of a client's guilty secret is honoured and respected.

Mr. Cuffing's offices are spacious. Mr. Cuffing's private residence at Richmond is furnished lavishly and well. Mr. Cuffing is above suspicion, socially, morally, financially. He is a bachelor, but his housekeeper is his own sister. The local vestry has elected him to be the ratepayers' churchwarden. His name is sought for to

give strength and respectability to the prospectuses of joint stock companies.

Tricky clients know it is useless to solicit the legal aid of Mr. Simon Cuffing. He is not one of your so-called smart lawyers, who have no scruples about right or wrong if you pay him his fees. His clerks are regular church or chapel goers; he will have no frivolous young men about him. Other lawyers may; he does not wish to interfere with the liberty of the subject. Other solicitors may allow their clerks to go to theatres, to frequent music-halls, that is the business of their employers; but in his opinion the law is a solemn and dignified profession, and demands wise heads and sober minds in its votaries. Let him have grave men about him, who have serious views of life, and who erect for themselves a high moral standard. In the early days of his professional career he might have been imposed upon by a scamp, and no doubt was now and then, but not to his knowledge did he ever take up a tainted case. It was not in his nature

to fight upon legal technicalities, or to take a delight in mere logical argument; he must have his sympathies enlisted or he was nowhere. The law was a noble and exalting profession rightly practised, and he would never condescend to take advantage of its uncertainties in the interest of wrong-doing of any kind.

Mr. Simon Cuffing would talk by the hour in this strain to his chief clerk, a sleek, gray-eyed, red-bearded gentleman, who would rub his hands and say, certainly, Mr. Cuffing was right, and it was a pleasure to be in a good man's service; but all the while, in spite of Mr. Cuffing's caution, the modest, unassuming clerk carried fierce passions beneath his immaculate waistcoat, and robbed his master with a calm regularity that defied suspicion. Moreover, he ruled his subordinates with an iron hand; so that in their turn they deceived Mr. Redman; but the business of the great legal house went on like clock-work, and the money rolled in so fast that Cuffing could hardly miss a thousand a year, that



fell by the way into the pocket of his principal man, who made it a rule to suspect every one else of dishonest intentions, and, like his master, covered himself with grand professions of virtue.

There was one man who could have pulled down Mr. Cuffing ; but the worthy lawyer allowed Mr. White three hundred a year, and invited him now and then to dine at Richmond, when some of the lawyer's inferior guests were gathered together. Moreover, Mr. White was almost a retainer of the house of Barnard, and he was bound in ties and promises to Tom Mayfield besides. So Cuffing prospered, and will no doubt flourish into white hairs and old age. A day of retribution may come, but it is not within our prophetic glance ; and we have no power over the destinies of the men and women who people this history of modern life.

If we could have controlled events, Tom Mayfield should have had a different lot to that which Fate has consigned him. At least, he should have married that Indian

girl with the round, brown limbs; he should have married her if only as the shadow of his great love for Clytie; he should have filled in the blank spaces of the picture with poetic musings and fancies, culled from memory; but it was not to be. Nature had reserved the Dunelm student for herself; had kept him for a poet; and the Muse delights in melancholy. There are no incidents in level happiness either for the historian, the biographer, or the poet. Nature is jealous, too. She must have a worshipper as well as a student. Therefore, she claimed Kalmat, and Fate ordained that in her most luxurious haunts, in her freshness, in her grandeur, in her world that was new to modern civilization, she should have a poet who could interpret the grand pulsations of her great heart, the soft delicacies of her tender moments, the deep secret thoughts of her passions, and the prophetic songs of her mighty plains and rivers.

Shaseta in the city was wooed and won; and thus was Kalmat widowed a second

time ; but he found happiness in the maiden's smile, in the bridegroom's honest grasp of the hand ; and the poet of the Sierras, with a paternal dignity, gave away the Indian maiden, and went back for good to the land of his adoption.

In after-days, when a happy husband and wife seeking repose from the rush and excitement of society, sat down to hold sweet communion of pleasant memories, they read together the new poet's songs of love and sorrow, of war and peace ; but only one of them understood the significance of the most recent work — a wild wail of vengeance, hot and scorching, with a strange, weird joy of death that paid fierce tribute to the Indian's untutored hate. But the true self-sacrificing nature of the poet returned to its original purity when the darker passion that, after all, only stamped the genuine character of the man, had had its outburst.

You cannot love flowers and sunshine and get inspiration from stream and mountain, and at the same time nurture an active

spirit of hatred ; and Kalmat was the poet of Nature, qualified by misery, by disappointed love, by solitude, but, above all, by that inborn faculty which moved the first singers in the earth's young days to interpret the visions which came to them in the mighty forests, or rose up to their poetic fancy from dale and river in tender spiritualizations.

"I am happy," he wrote, in a long letter to his dear friends at Grassnook at the close of our history. "It is owing to our own miseries that we cannot rightly enjoy the happiness of others. My misfortunes are all told ; I can have no other sorrows than those which are long since past ; and their corners are rounded ; moss and lichens and soft creepers have covered them, and made them lovely. They are linked with pleasant dreams. A disappointment, or a sorrow long past, is like a dead friend whom we have at last got to talk about, whose foibles, whose odd little ways, we can discuss with gentle memories of his goodness. There is much truth in the

proverbs which go to show that use is second nature.

“ I look back to the days of my boyhood with a calm delight. It is akin to reading a narrative poem. The sorrows of the time only make effective background for exhibiting the pleasures.

“ The cathedral bells come to me in pleasant chimes at evening. I see myself in cap and gown ; see myself crossing the cloisters, and cannot think that slim, pale, romantic youth was I,

“ A bust looks down upon me, while I write, with pouting lips and wavy hair ; but it is not the same in any sense as that which listened to my ravings in that little room over the porch in the College Green. There is a misty halo about that other bust ; and this is sharp and well cut, and is only a sort of sculptured finger-post on life's highway.

“ It is all a matter of time the sentiments of the mind, the impressions of passion ; they do not rub out, but they become moss-grown and comfortable to the touch of memory.

“But the thought that we have contributed to the happiness of others in whom our affections are interested ; the consciousness of being the author of some days of pleasure dedicated to the uses of those we love ; this is happiness. Tell Lady St. Barnard that I have one day before me in particular among my later memories when she folded her children in her arms, and took leave of Grassnook. Let her know that I watched over her for her husband, for her grandfather, for Auld Lang Syne ; that I saw her from the river, that I haunted her like her shadow, that heaven permitted me to be her guardian in the dark hour” [the tears welled into Clytie’s eyes as her husband read ; and St. Barnard said, “God bless him !”] “and that I see you now with your boys about you, and fancy myself still looking on from that quiet English river.

“You ask me to come to England. It may not be.

“Shaseta begs me to visit Boston. I am a grandfather, she says. For to her that ceremony at the church was a reality.

I gave her to her husband. They have called the child's name Kalmat.

“But I am here for good ; I am here till the end. There are sheep upon the hill-side ; goats and herds in the valley. The river makes a glass for the pines and the oaks ; the vine trails along the bank. I am not made for cities. My early life was a cloistered youth with only one fair dream ; my latter days are here in the land that gave me strength of limb and the poet's soul. I return to the old familiar places, and build me a final home, furnished perchance with more regard to luxury than heretofore, and with a real library collected in the far-off city, brought here with strain of bullock and danger of the war-trail ; such taint of city life alone shall testify my origin and my taste, adding to the curious wonder of my neighbours, red men and white.

““I know a grassy slope above the sea,  
The utmost limit of the western land.  
In savage gnarl'd and antique majesty  
The great trees belt about the place, and stand

---

In guard, with mailèd limb and lifted hand  
Against the old approaching civic pride.

The foamy brooklets seaward leap ; the bland  
Still air is fresh with touch of wood and tide,  
And peace, eternal peace, possesses wild and wide.

“ ‘ Here I remain, here I abide and rest ;  
Some flocks and herds shall feed along the stream ;  
Some corn and climbing vines shall make us blest  
With bread and luscious fruit . . . . the sunny  
dream  
Of savage men in moccasins that seem  
To come and go in silence, girt in shell,  
Before a sun-clad cabin-door, I deem  
The harbinger of peace. Hope weaves her spell  
Again about the wearied heart, and all is well.’ ”

THE END.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*In three vols., at all Libraries,*

# IN THE LAP OF FORTUNE.

By JOSEPH HATTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY OF POPPIES," "CHRISTOPHER HEN-  
RICK," "THE TALLANTS OF BARTON," "PIPPINS AND  
CHEESE," "WITH A SHOW IN THE NORTH," "BITTER  
SWEETS," ETC.

---

"The first love-making of the boy for the girl whose sweet song floating from the factory windows, and whose lovely face framed in the opening made by a couple of panes, had made him love before he knew the meaning of the word, is a true idyll of a very pure kind.... The awkward and timid lad by the side of the more matured and self-possessed girl; his lack of words and her readiness; his asking for the sign of favour that was all the world to him, but such a disappointment and tame little folly to her; his over-sensitiveness, fearing to offend, and her more womanly receptivity not unwilling to be offended—all this is admirably done."—*Saturday Review*.

"Mr. Joseph Hatton does not need the reputation acquired by his other writings to introduce 'In the Lap of Fortune' to the lovers of fiction. The work can well stand on its own merits. It is alike excellent in structure, style, and delineation of character..... Mr. Hatton's book turns on unusual events, but no one can say that they are not such as may happen in life."—*Daily Telegraph*.

"The best parts of the book, however, are to be found in the bits of happy description, the pure air of freshness and feeling, and the snatches of moralizing which colour the thread of Mr. Hatton's story."—*Standard*.

"Mr. Hatton, though not an Eliot or a Dickens, has merits of his own.... Lucy is picturesque enough for the central figure in a cottage idyll, and it is in such tender bits of domesticity that we see Mr. Hatton at his best. The crimes and machinations of Magar and his accomplices, which form the foil to the brighter plot, are unpleasantly realistic, and need not detain us. On the whole, the tale is ably told, and contains so much that is in good taste that we can afford to condone its mannerism."—*Athenaeum*.

"Full of character, original in conception, and bright and pleasant in execution.... Mr. Hatton has fairly established his claim to a far higher and closer style of criticism than would fit the case of the ordinary novelist."—*The Hour*.

"The volumes abound with descriptive and pathetic passages worthy of the author of 'The Valley of Poppies.'"—*The Figaro*.

"There is a healthy tone about the story which is absolutely refreshing, while the plot, a rare merit nowadays, is carefully constructed and artistically worked out..... Mr. Hatton is an artist who knows where to begin and where to leave off. There is a dash of sensation in the book, but the author has not allowed himself to be led into the horrible."—*Birmingham Daily Gazette*.

"Joseph Hatton's novel, appearing as it does concurrently with Lord Lytton's last work, and appearing with the imprint of Lord Lytton's old publishers upon its title-page, may be taken as a sign that the race of English novelists is not yet extinct, that we have still men left with brains, we hope, as fertile, with fancy as rich, and with pens as fluent as those of the great masters of fiction who have recently passed away.... Mr. Hatton practises no theatrical tricks upon you. He has a story to tell which is worth telling, and he tells it; but he tells it as Defoe might tell it if Defoe were writing for us to-day, not as if it were a mere creation of his own fancy, but as if it were a transcript from life, and with that intense sense of reality which constitutes one of the greatest charms of fiction."—*Bristol Times and Mirror*.

---

LONDON:

CHAPMAN & HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

*J. H.*







